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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

Know THY SELF

S. S. Haksar

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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

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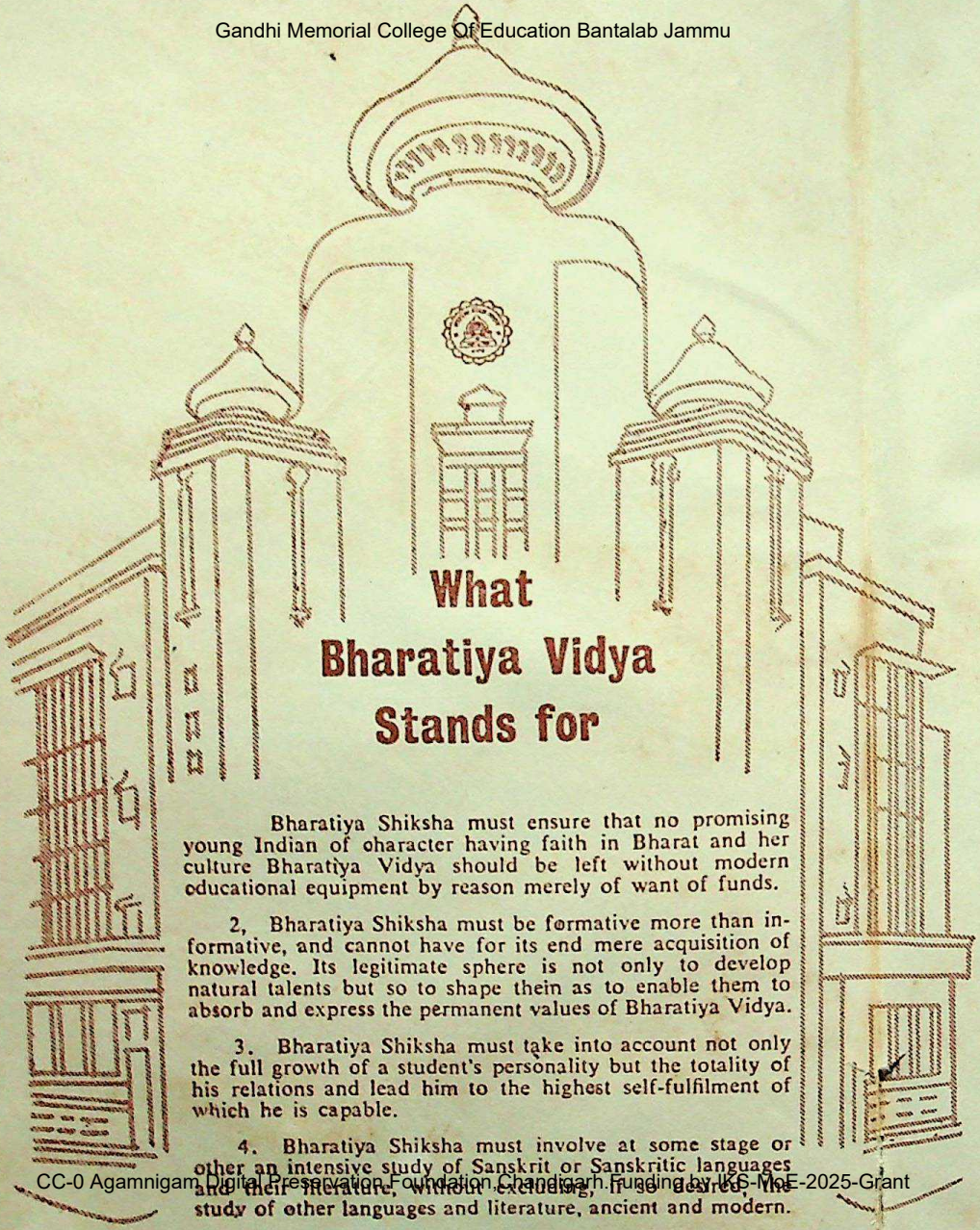

What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2, Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

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5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Sishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which is flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form of attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

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आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I. 89. i

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General Editors

R. R. DIWAKAR

S. RAMAKRISHNAN

196

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S. S. HAKSAR

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Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

BOMBAY

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KULAPATI'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the re-integration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

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We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata,* summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul;

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he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita,* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,
NEW DELHI:
3rd October, 1951.

K. M. MUNSHI

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Note:

Swami Sivanandaji who wrote the Foreword of this book left for his heavenly abode some years ago and the author Shri S. S. Haksar passed away on November 21st 1973 while this book was under print.

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I am extremely thankful to the KASHMIRI PANDITS' ASSOCIATION, BOMBAY, for the help and encouragement that they have given to me in the publication of my book through the renowned BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN.

28th September, 1973. S. S. HAKSAR

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FOREWORD

"Know Thy Self" is a brilliant work from the pen of Sri Sham Sunder Haksar, suitable to the modern reader with an intellect much perverted by a number of atheistic and materialistic doctrines, so much in the air in these days.

The intellectual arrogance of modern man has brought him repeatedly to the very brink of self-destruction and total annihilation through the medium of his own discoveries and inventions. Still, he is not yet out of the danger zone, and he will not be, so long as his intellect does not begin to work in the correct direction. If he only adopted an enlightened approach to Science and its allied modern subjects, those very sciences will point at something much beyond themselves, and much more real and substantial. Science and scientists are awakening at a great speed to their own limitations as a result of their own studies of the mysterious realms of Nature and her workings—all invariably suggesting a Transcendental Reality, a mysterious Existence, and an abstract Being lying at the very bottom of the subtlest aspects of Nature. But, they have also realised that access into this Transcendental and Abstract Thing cannot be had through their telescopes and test-tubes, and a different channel of communication is to be established to know the

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final and ultimate substance of Nature, and by implication, of Man, who is also a part of Nature. Here, the scientist is afraid, most understandably, whether he is becoming a votary of mysticism and spiritualism.

The author has discussed in his work all the subtle points of analytical enquiry into the ultimate essence of phenomena confronting man here, and has successfully and brilliantly proved his points. Every thinker will ultimately become a Vedantin—one who gets convinced that the ultimate Reality is an unlimited, all-pervading and attributeless mass of Consciousness, out of which the manifold Nature evolves or appears to evolve in a mysterious way. The One becomes the many, which is the central theme of our Upanishads.

The basis of life is Consciousness or Chit. The goal of life is to manifest this inherent Consciousness by purifying the medium through which it is to be approached and expressed. Science is going to prove this only in the end. On that day, Science and Spirituality will shake hands, understanding one another fully well.

I wish this book a wide circulation, and congratulate the author for his success in exposition. May he turn out further works of such kind for the benefit of the spiritually-starved people of this Atomic Age.

Swami Sivananda

(Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, U.P.)

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128TH GEETA GYANA YAGNA

Swami Chinmayananda 4-C, Annaswami Mudaliar Road,
BANGALORE-1.
14-3-64.

Know Thy Self is a beautiful handy book written with sincerity and great love for the theme. Sri Haksar has a great paternal heart towards his readers. He brilliantly comes down to the level of his readers and certainly he makes diligent efforts to lift them from their present ruts of thinking into satisfying heights.

I wish Haksar all success, and feel confident in recommending this book for all those who want an intelligent introduction to Vedanta.

Sd/-
Swami Chinmayananda.

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PREFACE

This book is being written not with the intention of introducing or propagating a new religious doctrine, or school of philosophy or theology. In fact, the purpose of this book is quite the opposite. There is already such a large number of codes and schools and systems, and such a fierce antagonism among them, that ordinary man feels deeply confused and bewildered, and even sometimes disgusted. The doctrinaire and institutionalised approach of most religious systems has no appeal to the mind and heart of the modern man and woman. Faith alone does not carry conviction or conformity, and the modern mind is not moved by the mere force or antiquity of spiritual or religious dogmas and authority. Even more is the aversion to ritual, or compliance with religious observances and conventions, and the 'do-s' and 'don't-s' following therefrom. What is therefore required in such a situation is not the establishment of a new religion, or another school or cult, but a fusion and synthesis, on a rational basis, of the many prevailing religious systems and schools.

There is no doubt, and can never be a doubt, that the great religions and philosophical systems of the world are all well-founded on essentially sound principles and eternal

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truths. There surely are differences among them, in the matter of particular tenets, and details of approach and exposition of the basic principles. But such differences and variety are only natural, when we bear in mind the vast and varied conditions, physical, circumstantial, and human, under which those religions had their origin and growth. Each of the great sages and prophets had to propagate the Truth, and make his appeal and carry conviction, to a very different set of people, living different lives, under differing conditions and possessed of very distinct and different cultures, traditions, and education. Nonetheless, if we probe deeper, and closely and impartially study the basic principles enunciated by the great religions and schools of thought, we will find a harmony in the variety, a unity in diversity.

It is with this end in view that an attempt is being made in this book to present the salient and eternal truths, which underlie all great religions and philosophies, without bringing in, and mixing it up with, the detailed tenets and codes, rituals and conventions, associated with them. Ritualism and conformism had been developed and exaggerated to such a great extent in the intermediate past, that it has evoked and generated a wholesale antagonism and cynicism in the modern mind against all religion and spirituality. Intense materialism is the order of the day, and atheism and agnosticism has become the vogue. Bred and nurtured as the present-day man and woman is in the ever-widening influence and training of science and technology, there is a complete lack of, and incapacity for, unquestioning belief and blind faith in mere spiritual pronouncements (may be of the highest order), and religious dogmas, if they are unsupported by reason, and unconfirmed by, or divergent to, the latest discoveries of science, and researches and conclusions of modern thought. Here again, there is the trouble

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flict in the various theories and conclusions of modern thought and scientific investigations, which makes confusion worse confounded. But there is everytime a likelihood and a good chance that, given a rational interpretation and logical explanation of the basic and universal principles, and essential truths of religious philosophy, the scientifically-inclined modern mind will accept them and make them its own. Such is the intention and objective of this book.

Thus, whatever is said here in this book is only a reiteration of the ancient and time-honoured Truths and 'Wisdom of the ages'. The discerning reader will not fail to note that the arguments and conclusions advanced in this book are all based upon the scriptures and sacred writings of the religions and philosophies of man, in whatever clime or country they might have been revealed or propounded. But the aim and purpose being what has been earlier stated, the approach and method of discussion and elucidation in this book is different from that which is commonly followed in books on religious and spiritual subjects. The line adopted here is to eschew scriptural quotations and authoritative sayings and writings, for developing and sustaining the arguments and conclusions; and in their place to use logical and cogent reasoning, in order to make for a purely rational approach and dissertation.

Now, a word is needed regarding the subject-matter of this book. There are innumerable aspects in which the Eternal Reality reveals itself, and innumerable are the ways towards an approach and understanding of its different facets and revelations. It is therefore impossible to discuss and describe that Infinite and Eternal Being exhaustively, or even comprehensively to any great extent. What is, however, possible, and has been attempted, time and again by the

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great seers and thinkers of all time, is to take up one or other of the manifold aspects and manifestations of the Infinite Being, and to try to understand and explain them. It is in this spirit of humility, and sense of imperfection, that an endeavour is being made in this book to throw some light on the essential and basic Reality, which is One and Indivisible, and which permeates, encompasses and holds together all that is, ever has been and ever will be. Once that Reality is well understood, and it is found to be none other than one's own real Self, as opposed to the false and delusive self with which every one commonly identifies himself, it would be possible and natural to turn one's attachment and identification from the false to the True, from the unreal to the Real, from the fleeting and perishable to the lasting and immortal Blissful 'Self'.

The aim and purpose of human life is 'Self-realisation'. It is the ultimate and fundamental objective towards which all the efforts and activities of man should be directed and co-ordinated. It is the final stage in his evolution; and without achieving it, he is under-developed and imperfect and far removed from the state of Immortality and Bliss that is his birth-right, his own real nature. Realisation of 'Self' dispels the clouds of ignorance, eradicates sin and misery, and releases man from the bondage of the ego. He regains his supreme spiritual status, and is re-established in his real state of Immortality, Infinite Knowledge and power, and perfect and eternal Bliss. Many and varied are the ways to achieve this supreme objective. Though the goal is one, the approach and endeavour of every person must needs be on the path that is most suited to his nature, aptitude and circumstance. Every one has to follow the line as dictated by his individual traits and tendencies, mental and physical conditions, and circumstances. The essential pre-

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requisites, however, are an intense desire for liberation from sin and misery, and deep-rooted faith in the ideal. Possessed of the above two essentials, every person can aspire for and attain the goal ('self-realisation') by relentlessly and strenuously pursuing and advancing on the path most suited to him.

It is the purpose of this book to enunciate the true nature of 'Self —in Part I; to describe how ignorance and illusion surround and vitiate man's efforts for real and lasting happiness and self-expression—in Part II; and to show the ways by which he can dispel ignorance and attain the perfect state of Blissful 'Self-realisation'—in Part III. I hope and pray that this book may lead to deeper thinking and an earnest enquiry in the reader regarding his real nature and true Self, and create an ardent desire and longing in him for achieving the aim and purpose of human existence: 'Self-realisation'. May this book help him to know and realise his spiritual nature, his immortal blissful self, and his basic unity with all that exists.

S. S. HAKSAR

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CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Acknowledgement	ix
	Foreword	xi
	Preface	xv
	PART I	
	REAL SELF AND THE EGO	
I.	Self: The Outer Aspect	1
II.	Self: The Inner Aspect	15
III.	Matter	28
IV.	Life	34
V.	Universe	54
VI.	The Real Self	67
	PART II	
	QUEST OF HAPPINESS	
VII.	Happiness	93
VIII.	Unhappiness	103
IX.	Unhappiness—Its Cause and Cure	111
X.	The Nature and Essence of Truth ..	119

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Chapter Page

XI. Right Understanding and Realisation of Truth 125

XII. 'Mana' and 'Buddhi', and the Mind in General 136

XIII. Vice and Virtue and Buddhi's Role .. 147

XIV. 'Self'-Realisation—The Goal of Human Life and Paths Leading to It 157

PART III

THE FOUR PATHS

XV. The Path of Action ("Karma Yoga") .. 171

XVI. The Path of Knowledge ("Gyan Yoga") .. 184

XVII. The Path of Meditation ("Dhyan Yoga") .. 194

XVIII. The Path of Devotion ("Bhakti Yoga") .. 217

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PART I

REAL SELF AND THE EGO

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I. SELF: THE OUTER ASPECT

'I'—the first personal pronoun—is the greatest riddle in the world. It is at once the most intimately familiar and the most mysterious concept. Be it a child or an old man, an illiterate person or a highly educated person, everyone is sure about what he (or she) means by 'I'. And yet, how wrong is the sense in which it is understood, almost universally, and accepted unhesitatingly by all. It is really amazing how such a simple matter has got into such a deep misunderstanding, and it would be shown in the following pages how and where the mistake arises.

Ask anyone what he (or she) means by 'I', and sure and swift would be the reply: 'I am Mr. (or Mrs.) X' and he may further point towards his body to signify what he means. If you question further, he would go on to say that he is a resident of so-and-so place, is engaged in such and such business, profession or other work. Probed still further, he would go on to disclose his education (if any), the names of his relations and friends, and any note-worthy events connected with his life. Thus, it comes to this that 'I' to everyone means his body and his name, and all other attributes and connections that go with his body.

Let us now examine whether such a concept of 'I' is

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really correct and true. By pointing towards your body and saying this is 'I'—Mr. X, you have only indicated *your* body and *your* name. But the question 'who are you?' remains unreplied. You might further elaborate by saying: 'I live in Delhi, and am a professor in Delhi University.' Even this does not give a clue to who you are really, and by adding up the names of your relations and friends, you would be no nearer to answering the question 'who are you?' And the reason is very clear. You are describing all *your* attributes and name and form, and are all the time saying in your own very words: '*My* name is X, *my* residence is in Delhi, *my* work is that of a professor, *my* father and *my* son are so and so', and on top of all this you go on to say 'This is *my* body—*myself*'. What a paradox! You yourself profess to possess your body, clearly implying thereby that you and your body are something different, and that you are the one who possess the body. It is thus quite clear that whatever you have said about your 'I' is only a recital of its various attributes and has not clarified the real sense and meaning of your 'I'.

Let us go a little deeper in the matter and the position would be clear. Let us assume you quit Delhi and give up your job as professor. And still you do not cease to be 'I'. Let us go further and assume that you begin to work on a new job, in a new place, and under a new name 'Y'. And yet you continue to be 'I'. And, if you say that my concept of 'I' is made up of all the existing parts and attributes at a time, it would then lead to the conclusion that the 'I' is undergoing changes in you from time to time. But that is not correct. The basic consciousness of 'I' is uniform and changeless in every person, and he is well aware and conscious of the changes taking place in his body, in his mind, and round about him. Whatever changes take place

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in the body, mind, or environments are merely recorded and understood by the one—the real 'I'—inside everyone, as the experiences or events connected with what he owns or possesses, or is related to. This concept of the homogeneity and continuity of 'I', at all times and in all conditions, is of fundamental and paramount importance, and must never be forgotten.

Leaving aside for the moment the connections and attributes of the 'I', let us examine closely the body with which everyone is seemingly identified. Th body has its periods of childhood, youth, middle age, and old age; it has its conditions of health and disease; it is sometimes lean and at other times fat; it has its comforts and discomforts, fatigue and rest, heat and cold, and so on. During all these varying conditions and experiences, the 'I' is merely registering changes, as some things happening to one of its possessions, while all the time itself remaining the one, uniform, changeless consciousness of the possessor—the *Master* within. One may use inappropriate language when saying 'I am lean' or 'I am fat', 'I am tired', 'I am young' or 'I am old' etc. But, all the time, what is really meant is *'My body* is lean or fat, tired or rested, young or old'. It would be quite the same thing to say about one of your relatives or pet animals, e.g. 'my son is lean', 'my horse is old', 'my servant is tired'. All such observations merely relate to the things which you *know of,* or possess, and similar are your observations about your so-called personal conditions, which are merely conditions of your body.

Now, if we delve deeper and further inside of the 'so-called' *I,* we meet with the internal or *mental* phenomena, as opposed to the *physical,* which we have been so far considering. We are identifying the 'I' not only with our bodies

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and environments, but also, very much so, with our mind, or mental processes. Let us first understand what these mental processes, or *mind* is, in its broadest sense. It consists of (i) the incoming sensations through the five sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue (taste), and skin (touch). They are known as *Gyan-Indriyas*. It may here be noted that there is another set of five Indriyas, called Karma-Indriyas, which are the instruments or agencies in our body for carrying on external physical activities. The said Indriyas are: (1) hands, (2) feet, (3) tongue (speech), and (4) and (5) the two organs of excretion of urine and stools.

(ii) Next part of our mental make-up is the 'Mana' or what is generally known as mind—the functioning of our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. (iii) Then, there is that part of our mental make-up which is known as 'Buddhi' (Intellect), or the discriminating and decisive aspect of mind. And (iv) is that part of mind which is called 'Chitta' or the stock of ideas, experiences, and memories that we carry within our minds.

I. Let us first take the *Gyan-Indriyas*. It is easy to see that 'I' in us is distinctly separate from the sensations coming in from our five Indriyas. When some one says: 'I see a tree' or 'I hear a song' or 'I smell rose scent' or 'I taste salt' or 'I touch hot water', all that is meant is simply certain sensations that have been carried into *our mind* by *our* eye, ear, nose, tongue (taste), or skin (touch) respectively. The contact of *my* five aforementioned Indriyas with the tree, the song, rose scent, salt, and hot water, respectively, has given rise to five corresponding sensations, which have been recorded by *my* mind. It is like the work performed by an agent or sub-agents for a Master, that the *Indriyas*

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receive sensations and the *mind* (Mana) records them for the 'I', who is the Master inside. It is thus obvious that one's 'I' is quite distinct from the sensations coming in from the Indriyas, and being registered by the mind (Mana).

II. Let us next examine the case of *Mana* or mind proper and see if it is the 'I'. There is no doubt that, by and large, we have come to identify ourselves with our Mana—the thinking, and feeling aspect of our mental make-up. A few illustrations will make the matter clear. Supposing I am taking a cold shower-bath after a hot day's work. My mind (Mana) experiences a pleasant sensation, coming in from my skin (touch sensation). Or again, I am eating delicious food. The Indriya of taste, i.e. the tongue is carrying sensations to the *Mana* (Mind) inside me, and causing a pleasing sensation. Take another case: Coming back from your work on an evening, and unlocking your room, you get inside and see (with the sight-Indriya: Eye) that there is a fire raging in the room, that most of the furnishings are burnt up and the furniture etc. is being swallowed up by the flames. Now here, the eye has brought certain reports which the mind has registered, and recorded pain (or unpleasantness) therefrom. The ideas of the cause and the consequences of the event pass through the mind, and certain mental processes, feelings and emotions are set going. Other such cases of the working of the mind can be multiplied, but it would suffice here to say that the function of mind ('Mana') is that of registering incoming sensations, experiencing pleasure or pain therefrom, and activising the Karma-Indriyas or other physical or mental processes according to the pleasure or pain derived from a given event.

There is another method also by which the mind

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('Mana') works. It is not only through the incoming sensations that the mind is set going, but it also carries on its activity through the flow of its own thoughts and ideas, which it regulates according to the needs or force of the prevalent mood or circumstance. Sometimes, as in dreams, mind continues to be active in spite of the cessation of the functions of 'Indriyas'. In such cases, it draws upon the stock of its past ideas and experiences and memory of events. Even during waking periods, the mind may get so absorbed in its chain of ideas and reflective thinking that outer objects and sensations therefrom do not get any attention or entry into the mind. As a matter of fact our Minds (Mana) have such a variety of functions and aspects that a detailed study of them will involve a discussion of phenomena such as Hypnotism, Meditation, Trance, Yogic Samadhi, etc. which is beyond the scope and purpose of this study. For the sake of our enquiry into the true nature of 'I', it is enough to prove that mind (Mana) is distinct from my 'Self'. Before we come back to that, let us first continue the study of the remaining two aspects or functions of our mental make-up viz., 'Buddhi' and 'Chitta', as referred to earlier.

III. Buddhi is the discriminating and decisive function of our mind (mind used in the widest sense). An illustration will help to explain what this means. Let us revert to the illustration given earlier in connection with 'Mana': Someone is eating delicious food and his mind is receiving the pleasant sensations from the tongue (taste) and may be nose (smell) and eye (tempting sights). The mind is filled with the pleasant sensations and is continuing to eat in order to indefinitely extend the period of enjoyment. 'Buddhi' steps in at this stage, and calls a halt. It is that discriminating and decisive function of the mind (broad

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sense), which reminds the 'Mana' that it has allowed enough eating, and for the sake of the body's good health no further eating should be continued. As a result, the 'Mana' takes the advice of 'Buddhi', and causes the eating (a process of 'Karma-Indriyas') to be stopped, in spite of the fact that the Mana was thoroughly enjoying the eating. It may be remarked on the other hand, that 'Mana' might refuse to abide by the advice of 'Buddhi' and continue the eating. In such a case, we would only say that 'Buddhi' is not occupying the rightful and governing position in that person's mental make-up, and 'Mana' is usurping the place of ascendancy. But one time or other, by the piling up of evidence that the refusal to obey the behests of the sage 'Buddhi', has resulted in pain and suffering, good sense will dawn on 'Mana', and it will reform its wayward conduct and obey 'Buddhi'.

Take another instance: Suppose it is a chilly January morning with heavy rain and strong breeze. Mr. X is sleeping comfortably in his heated room in a warm and cosy bed, and the time is 5 A.M. His factory starts working at 6 A.M. Now, howsoever unpleasant and hard it may be for his 'Mana' to give up the pleasant environments of the warm bed and cosy room, the 'Buddhi' has commanded that it is time to order the body out of the bed, prepare itself for the day's duties, and get going to the factory.

From the above two examples, it would be clear that 'Buddhi' is (or should rightly be) the guiding and controlling power over the 'Mana' in our mental make-up. In those unfortunate cases, however, where the 'Mana' refuses to be controlled, the retributory processes of suffering and pain, which are set in motion as a result of disobedience to the counsel of 'Buddhi', bring about surely, one time or another,

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early or late, the reformation and correction of the ways of 'Mana'.

From the foregoing analysis, it would be clear that howsoever we might identify ourselves with 'Mana', there is something else in us which is above and on top of 'Mana'—and that is our 'Buddhi'. Our 'Mana' strays and wanders, runs from one sensation to another, from one thought to another, but 'Buddhi' is always there to check and control and direct the activities of 'Mana'. Thus, from the very nature of our mental make-up and the supervisory status of our 'Buddhi' over the 'Mana', it is obvious that 'Mana' is not the 'I' of man, and that there is another part or facet of the mind (broad sense) which governs and controls the 'Mana', and is the centre of power inside us, viz., our 'Buddhi'. But even this part of our mind—our 'Buddhi', should not be confused or identified with our 'self'—the 'I'. Here again it must be noted that 'Buddhi' is as much a possession of the real 'Self', as 'Mana', or any other part or function of the body or mind. It is my 'Buddhi' and not 'I', and I am well aware of its existence, its activities, and its strength and weakness.

IV. *Chitta* is memory or stored up ideas and experiences. This aspect of our mental structure, or mind (broadly speaking), is a sort of Bank or Stores, where our experiences, our ideas and reactions to various things and events, are being constantly stored up, from the beginning of our conscious life to its end. Needless to say, the stock as it goes on increasing and growing, at the same time goes on shedding away many of the accumulated items, by the process commonly known as forgetting. Such items, as have ceased to be of use or interest, gradually pass out and disappear from our 'Chitta'—memory, yielding place to new and fresh ones,

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according as they are of greater use and interest to us. There is of course a difference from man to man in the capacity of imbibing and retaining facts, events and ideas in one's memory, and there is a variation in that capacity in the same person from time to time, and age to age. But all that is a matter of detail, with which we, in our present context, are not concerned. Suffice it to say that 'Chitta' in us is the handy guide or reference book, from which our 'Buddhi' draws out relevant portions and items, for the guidance and direction of the 'Mana' in its daily activities. Similarly, our 'Mana' draws upon the stored up material of ideas and memories from the 'Chitta', and acts and reacts to the various situations confronting it, in the light of the suitability or desirability of such activities, as determined by previous experiences stored up in the 'Chitta'. It may do so, as described earlier, in consultation with 'Buddhi', or it may act independently without reference to 'Buddhi'.

We have thus far examined how our mental structure or Mind in its broadest sense, is constituted and what are its components and functions. All our knowledge of the world is based upon the 'Gyan-Indriyas', which carry sensations inside to the 'Mana'. Immediately on receipt of the incoming sensations, they are recorded in 'Chitta' and docketed in their proper context. The 'Mana' then becomes active, either independently or in consultation with 'Buddhi', and reacts in a desirable (to derive pleasure or avert pain) or a suitable way (in view of some purpose or objective) through the instrumentality of 'Karma-Indriyas', or by activising its own self in thought and reflection. 'Buddhi' asserts itself if the 'Mana' continues to act on its own and heads on in a wrong direction. This is the broad picture of the constitution of our mind, and the way in which it functions, and ceaselessly continues to function throughout our

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lives, excepting however at such times when we are in deep dreamless sleep, or in a faint, or under the effects of an anaesthetic, or 'Yogic' trance ('Samadhi'). Even in the state of dreaming, the 'Mana', 'Buddhi', and 'Chitta', are functioning, although in an abnormal and irregular fashion; and it is only the 'Gyan-Indriyas' and 'Karma-Indriyas' that have ceased to work (excepting in unusual dreams).

Now the real point that is of importance and has to be firmly noted, is that throughout the functioning of these mental organs (and in the case of the body, of the physical organs), one fact stands clearly out of the din of this activity—whether mental or physical. And that is the distinct entity 'I', who owns and possesses the whole mind and body. It is all the time: 'My body', 'My eye and ear', 'My hands and feet', 'My memory', 'My thinking' and 'My decision'. It is always: 'My memory tells me', 'My *Buddhi* does not approve of such an action', or 'My *Mana* is wandering and confused'. Everyone of us has such experiences as 'not in a mood to study at this time, because my *Mana* is engrossed with thoughts of an impending wedding party'. Or again: 'Give me time till tomorrow for giving my considered decision, because just now my *Buddhi* is not working well and fast'. Such experiences are myriad in the case of every person, and the common outstanding feature of them all is the subservient position of the entire physical and mental make-up to the one Master inside, which is the 'I', and which owns and possesses all body and all mind. These mental and physical organs may have (and do have) their ups and downs, their activities or their loss of activities—as for instance in blindness or deafness, the amputation of a limb, loss of memory through accident or age, incapacity to think well and in a sustained manner

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due to disease or distress—but the 'I' remains always steadily conscious of all such activities and changes taking place in this complex organisation of mind and body, that it possesses.

If we go a little deeper still into the phenomena of mental and bodily activities and their varying states, we will get irrefutable evidence of the separate existence and identity of the 'I'—the all-conscious Master within, the real self. Take the case of a man in deep dreamless sleep. His 'Mana', 'Buddhi,' 'Chitta', and 'Indriyas' are in a state of complete stagnation, his body is inactive and insensitive (except for the functioning of involuntary and reflex actions of the heart, lungs etc.). To all intents and purposes, he is as good as dead. A snake may crawl over his body, and he would be unaware and unafraid of it. The best or worst news may be communicated through his ears or eyes, and yet he is unaffected. His house may catch fire and be reduced to shambles, and he is not conscious of, or worried about it. It looks as if he has ceased to exist. All his vital and voluntary activities of the mind and body are suspended in a state of utter oblivion, and even if someone calls him by his name, he fails to respond or recognise. All awareness and consciousness seem to have disappeared. But, no—not all. His body is inactive, his mental functions have stopped, but the 'I' is very much alive and active, all the time. In spite of the complete oblivion prevailing all round, the 'I' is aware and conscious—'I' is conscious of itself and of its mental and physical properties. The explanation of this is simple enough, because no sooner the man wakes up from his sleep, he is aware of his identity and personality, his environs and relations and all other facts of his life, which he knew before he fell into the oblivion of sleep. He has not to be told by anyone what his name is, what his

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other conditions and circumstances of life are. He rises up from sleep completely possessed of all his mental and physical possessions as they were to him when he fell asleep. And all this occurs in spite of the seemingly full and complete break in his mental and physical existence. The reason is not far to see. It lies within himself—within each and every one of us. There is the one—the 'I' in each of us, who is ever conscious, the supreme custodian of all that we are and possess, the Master of the entire organisation of our mental and physical structure, who is all the time awake and aware. That is the connecting and coordinating link between all our physical parts, all our conditions and states of consciousness, all our emotions and feelings, our entire being.

Similar are the experiences of persons who are administered anaesthetics or otherwise become unconscious. What tortuous operations are performed by surgeons—internal parts of the body are torn open, limbs are cut, the whole body is subjected to seemingly infinite pain and injury, and yet the person undergoing the operation is not even aware of anything extraordinary happening to him. It is thus obvious that the body is not the 'I', nor is the Mana which registers the pains, 'I', because Mana has, for the time of the operation under the anaesthetic, ceased to exist; but the 'I', continues its existence unabated and unaffected. The 'I' would be the exact 'I' after the operation as it was before it, and even during the operation the 'I' continued to exist.

The state of 'Yogic Trance' or 'Samadhi' is further proof of the separate identity of 'I' from mind and body, but that evidence is obtainable only by those who have practised and mastered the 'Yoga' system and have attained that super state. But even to a lay man, it would be clear

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from authorised records or personal observations of the demonstrations of Yogic practices, that the body and mind work in that state, as mere petty instruments of the 'I' within, and all the functions of mind and body are thoroughly under the control and direction of the 'I', so much so that even the involuntary processes in the body, such as actions of the heart and lungs and blood and glands, can be stopped at the command of 'I'.

And finally, let us examine what we can of the phenomenon of death. Unfortunately it is too true that "dead men tell no tales", and therefore we have no direct experience or knowledge of what happens at death or after it, except what the doctors and physiologists may explain to us in terms of physical data. And as regards the mental and emotional counterpart of death, there is no available direct evidence, except what philosophers and saints have to say about it. But there is one unmistakable direct evidence about death, from which we can draw logical and reasonable conclusions. Take an illustration to bring out the matter clearly: Mr. X. has died of sudden heart failure. His dead body is right before us, and to all outward appearances Mr. X. is lying down as any other man might be lying down, there being not the slightest change or difference in his looks. His eyes, nose, ears, skin, his hands and feet, his entire body remains the same, except for a growing stiffness and palour. Why does he not hear or see or recognise? Why does he not speak, or smile or weep? The doctors tell us that the heart has stopped beating, which has resulted in the death. But the heart is right there where it was and as it was—only that it does not move. The brain is there in his skull, right as it ever was—only that no blood is now circulating inside. How is it that the heart has stopped movement, and why can we not make it move

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again? The brain matter is all there, why then does it not think? We are informed that life is extinct in Mr. X, and that is why his eyes do not see, ears do not hear, hands and feet do not make movements, the heart does not beat, and the brain does not think—and so on. It is naturally asked what and where was life in Mr. X, the disappearance of which now has made such an enormous difference in him. There is hardly ever a satisfactory answer to this vital question: What and where is life?

But one simple fact stands out. Mr. X. on his death lost his 'I', or more appropriately the 'I' that was Mr. X., has severed its connections with the body, heart, brain and all the rest of it, that was commonly known as Mr. X. The body and all its parts and components are right there, but the owner of them all, the 'I' of Mr. X. has disappeared from the scene, and that has resulted in the death of Mr. X. —body and all. Call it life, or soul, or the Divine Spark, that is the 'I', the owner and the Master, our 'Real Self'.

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II. SELF : THE INNER ASPECT

We have, so far, been considering the question: 'Who am I?' from an analytical point of view. We have examined the various connotations that we ascribe to our sense of 'I'; and have shown that they do not stand the test of close scrutiny, and that, in the final analysis, there stands out something else, some entity which is deep inside us and behind all that is commonly and erroneously held to be our self, our 'I', that is the real 'I'—the constant, ever abiding, supreme Master within.

It would now be our endeavour to examine and investigate the positive nature and significance of 'I', through the method of synthesis or the teleological process of reasoning. Let it be immediately noted that in the examination of a matter like the nature of our Self—the 'I', we are faced with a tremendous difficulty. What we are proceeding to investigate is not some physical or material object, which can be subjected to examination and scrutiny by the senses ('Gyan-Indriyas') as is done in science laboratories. Here, we are attempting an enquiry into the nature of an entity which itself sustains and holds the very instruments of such an inquiry viz., the 'Indriyas', 'Mana', 'Buddhi' and 'Chitta'—in other words the whole of our observing, thinking, and reasoning faculties, which compose our mind in

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the broadest sense. It is like a drop of water trying to measure the ocean. As we have shown in the previous chapter, it is the 'I' who is possessing and coordinating all our physical and mental activities, and is the foundation of their very existence. Such being the case, our enquiry has to be carried on under a basic difficulty, and we have therefore to adopt such suitable methods which may lead to success in our effort. Because, now we are attempting to define the positive attributes and real nature of Self—the 'I', having already noted in the previous chapter what the 'Self' is not.

Let us therefore proceed on our enquiry with first taking a survey of any common attributes that may be noticeable in the 'I' of all living beings. If such a method of enquiry leads us to some invariably and constantly common features of all sentient beings, we would be able to postulate with a high degree of certainty that such ever-present and invariable attributes are of the very nature of 'Self'.

I. The very first thing that we are sure to notice from the lives and activities of all living beings—man, woman, bird or beast, is their intense and basic desire and effort to be alive. Leaving aside abnormal cases, everyone wants to be alive, and fights against death. Not only man, but even the birds and beasts, down to the lowest animals, avoid and fight against anything that tends to take away their lives. Life is seen to be the most precious and jealously guarded possession of all. It is the basic characteristic of all 'Selves'. 'To be' and 'continue to be' is seen to be identical.

This fact of persistence of life, and resistance to death, is glaringly obvious all round us. It may be said: 'Noth-

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ing is more certain than death'. But even more certain are the phenomena of life, the vital urge and zest for living, and the innate resistance to death. Death does occur and is inescapable; but life persists and pervades everywhere, and death is just an accident in its universal sweep. Everyone lives 'to live', and not just to die. He is alive now and is going to be alive tomorrow and the day after, and the next year, and for years and years to come.

And, on a deeper study of the matter, it would be clearly established that death is merely with reference to the body, and not to the 'I'. It is the body and its parts that die when death takes place. The 'I' never dies, and is not subject to death or decay. In fact, it is the severance of 'I' from the body that entails the death of the body. But, a more detailed consideration of this subject will follow later on, when we begin a study of the real nature of 'I'. Suffice it here to say that everyone wants to be alive, hopes always to keep living on, and avoids and fights with death.

Let us illustrate this from a few examples. Take the case of a jockey who has had a fall from horse-back while running a race. He sustains grievous fractures of his legs, and thigh-bones, and the doctors ultimately decide to amputate his legs—in order to *save his life*. He agrees to it, even though it means the end of his cherished career and ambition—and all for the purpose of saving his life. Or again, you are walking in a garden when you suddenly notice a snake crawling right across your path. You would immediately and instinctively leap aside and away, lest the snake bites and causes your death. At the time of bombings by enemy planes, all the residents of the area seek protection for their lives in bomb-shelters, forsaking all their valuables and most precious possessions to the inevitable

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destruction by bombs. It is so significant to observe cases where the desire to live on persists even though frightfully hemmed in by the hardest adversities or incurable maladies. And, where in some exceptional case, the sufferer puts an end of his life, the usual verdict is: 'committed suicide under temporary mental aberration'. Note here the words 'mental aberration', which make it clear that even the law and social consciousness regard the act of suicide 'a mental aberration', and the state of living and continuing to live, normal and natural.

Some instances on the contrary may be cited, where people have willingly sacrificed their lives for the sake of an ideal, a sacred cause, or love, etc. But they are exceptions, and we are here engaged in an investigation of the common and over-riding nature of sentient beings. And our enquiry and observations fully endorse the fact that everyone wants keenly to live, continue to live, and resists death. Man's is a complex mental make-up, constituted of emotions, and sentiments, and morals and religion, and so on, and there are bound to be exceptional and abnormal cases, according as one or other constituent part takes the leading hand in a certain set of circumstances. For our purpose, however, it is only required to show what is the most common and almost universal characteristic of all living beings. It is amply clear to anyone who looks around that life is most precious to all and is wanted; and death is resisted and is not wanted. It is instinctive to be alive and keep alive. *Eternal Existence* is our nature.

II. Continuing our enquiry further into the basic characteristics common to all living beings, we will notice that everyone wants to be happy, and avoids pain or unpleasantness. Barring exceptional cases, and special cir-

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cumstances, all living sentient beings are seeking happiness untainted by pain. From man down to the lowest animals, one common feature stands out clearly and that is: no one wants or allows himself to be in pain or unpleasantness. If, however, it so happens that one finds himself in a painful or unhappy situation, he immediately and instinctively makes his best efforts to get out of the unpleasant predicament. While the unhappy state lasts, he feels disturbed and out of sorts. There is the constant and irrepressible feeling that the unpleasantness is something to be driven away, that it is an unwelcome visitation by something foreign to his nature and has to be got rid of as soon as possible.

Look at cattle in the fields. As long as the day is not advanced, and the heat is not unpleasant, they continue to graze all over the pastures. But note their movements near midday, when the sun is hottest, specially during summer days. They instinctively move away from the open fields under the hot sun, and huddle together under the shade of trees or lie wallowing in swamps and pools, thus avoiding pain and discomfort, and getting pleasure. Take the case of ants. As soon as they find sugar lying somewhere, they all cluster on to the spot and begin to eat it up, because they get pleasure out of it. And the moment you throw gamaxine or other insecticide over the sugar, their pleasure ceases and they scramble away from the spot. Call a dog or a cat, pat it and play with it. It is pleased and draws nearer to you. But immediately you hit it and cause it pain, it runs away, and would refuse to come near you even though you tempt it. They, even these lower animals, seek pleasure and avoid pain. Such instances can be infinitely multiplied.

This characteristic feature of avoiding pain and un-

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pleasantness, and seeking pleasure, is all too vividly noticeable among human beings. From infancy onwards, all men and women are drawn towards pleasures, and shun discomfort, unpleasantness, unhappiness. The criterion and standard of pleasure is different in different persons, so also the reactions to and ideas about unpleasant things. What gives pleasure to one may fail to please another, or might even cause pain and unhappiness. Everyone has his own ideas and values, tastes and temperament, and naturally enough every person seeks pleasure, and avoids pain, in his own individual way according to his own lights and predilections. But in spite of the variety in the modes of enjoyment, one overriding fact stands out: everyone wants pleasure, wants to be happy, and does not want pain.

Pinch a baby, it cries; caress and cuddle it and you are rewarded by its smiles. Present a toy to a boy or girl, and they are delighted; snatch it away and they are in tears. The companionship of one's beloved is bliss, while separation is agony. As age advances, and ideas and ideals change, the sources of pleasure and pain vary accordingly. But there is none such as would not be attracted towards pleasure, and seek it, or would be repelled by something or some situation which is unpleasant to him. It is something fundamental and instinctive, a part of the very nature of all living beings, to be happy; and when they are in an unhappy state, they are very naturally and whole-heartedly trying to eradicate the unhappiness, and regain the happy state, which is their own nature, their birth-right.

Before we proceed further, it should be noted here that pleasure and happiness have been only loosely used in the preceding pages, as being identical. As a matter of fact and experience, there is a subtle difference between the two.

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We shall revert to this matter at a later stage, and explain the basic features of pleasure and happiness, and thus show the distinction between the two, in their deepest interpretation. It should be enough for our purpose here to say that happiness is a long-drawn-out and profound state of enjoyment. While pleasures are generally identified with the agreeable and enjoyable sensations coming in through the five senses ('Indriyas'), happiness in its ultimate sense, is a state of our being, which is basic to our very nature. It is always there in us, until and unless some conflicting and irritating causes, internal or external, disturb and break up for a time, the continued enjoyment, in ourselves, of that beatitude, the inherent Bliss. But, whether it be pleasure or happiness or Bliss, or any other name by which it is called, we all want it and strive for it, and avoid and resist its opposite. The very universality and intensity of such a desire in all living beings proves that happiness-infinite and unbroken happiness, is their very nature.

III. We have noted in the foregoing pages that the desire to live, and to be happy, is universal in man, woman, bird or beast, and is of the very nature of living sentient beings. Let us now probe further and see if there is any other characteristic of living beings which is equally universal and fundamental. It should be remembered that we are now trying to find out the basic positive attributes of 'Self'—that which we call the 'I'—having already noted and rejected those attributes and characteristics which are wrongly associated and identified with the 'I'.

Closely studying the ways of living, actions and reactions of living beings, we shall notice that they reveal some sort of knowledge, some degree of intelligence. There runs all through a current of intelligence in all life, howsoever varied

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it may be in its different forms and species, and individuals. There is unmistakable evidence of a purpose, of a method, in all the activities of living beings, much more so in the case of human beings, who are obviously the most intellectually advanced among living beings. From man down to the tiniest insect, the workings of an intelligence are all too obvious. Call it instinct or reflex, even the lowest animal reacts to particular situations in a particular way, or suitable manner. The suitability of any reaction is determined by the need or desire of the individual. But none would fail to notice how intelligent the reaction is in the context of a given situation. It may not be far from the truth to say that instinct reveals knowledge at its best and purest and simplest. Turning to the illustration given earlier—ants eating sugar—when suddenly an insecticide is poured over it, see how they disperse and give up eating that sugar instinctively. That instinct saves them from unpleasantness and death, and the result is achieved so promptly and efficiently, and simply. A place may be infested by mosquitos, but a few sprays of Flit will make them scurry away. Crows or dogs will boldly snatch away a loaf of bread from the hands of a child; but the same crows and dogs will keep away from a man even though he be eating from a plateful of rice and chapaties in front of them. Here, we see the workings of knowledge in its simplest form. It is not only that some knowledge is exhibited in the actions of lower animals, in the face of present and existing situations. There is ample evidence to prove that there is knowledge (or instinct, if that term is preferred to describe that mental activity) in the lower forms of life, even in regard to their future affairs. Note how even the tiniest insects and ants plan for the rainy days and stock their food; how the birds build their nests in anticipation of the coming of their young ones. Every bird, beast, fish, reptile or insect has an uncanny and accu-

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rate knowledge of what it has to eat, where to lie or move, when and with whom to mate, and whom to avoid and what to shun away from as being dangerous to its life or health. Any study of the activities of even lower animals brings forth staggering evidence of the existence of knowledge running right through and all over.

Now, if we go on to study the ways and activities of man, we observe that his whole life is based upon the workings of a much higher intelligence. No doubt, there is an infinite variety of actions and responses in different individuals to given situations, depending upon the degree and level of the knowledge that they possess and their general mental and emotional calibre. But, as compared to other living beings, man exhibits the highest degree and growth of knowledge. Like other animals, he does eat and drink when he is hungry or thirsty; he sleeps and rests when he is tired; and he mates and procreates like the lower animals. But man does many more things which reveal his higher knowledge. His achievements in the spheres of arts and sciences, poetry and literature, philosophy and metaphysics, etc. all go to show that there is knowledge and growing knowledge in him. It is thus clear that knowledge is an inseparable attribute of the 'I'—the self of every individual human being, as also that of all other living beings, though the knowledge is meagre and limited in the latter case. The 'I' *knows*: knows its wants and how to satisfy them, knows its troubles and dangers and how to avert and avoid them. Not only that; man in common with other animals, knows the elementary details of his life and surroundings; he is all the time trying to improve and extend his knowledge. Observe how even a child is trying to extend his knowledge by putting all sorts of questions to the elders, and poking his nose in all sorts of things and places. Give it a toy, and

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soon or late the toy would have been taken to pieces by the child in its quest for more knowledge about the toy, its construction, and working. This attribute of knowing and trying to know more, is inherent in 'I'. 'I am', 'I know', 'I will know more', is the essential and universal concomitant of the 'Self'. It is impossible to separate 'I-ness' with all the knowledge that is in the 'I'. Knowledge is an inherent and a fundamental characteristic of Self, a basic part of its very nature.

Before we pass on to the next part of our study, it would be well to take note of one aspect of 'knowledge', which we have just been considering. Knowledge is the very essence and nature of Self, and we have seen it permeating all forms of life, from man down to the lowest animals and insects. But knowledge as used here should not be confused with our minds: 'Indriyas', or 'Mana', or 'Buddhi', or 'Chitta', which have been analysed and discussed in a previous chapter. These latter are merely the instruments and vehicles of the 'Knowledge' that is 'I'. They merely make us, or help us, use the infinite knowledge that is in 'I'; and it is only because of the differences in the capacity and growth of our mental equipment ('Indriyas', 'Mana', 'Buddhi', and 'Chitta') that such a variety is noticed in the comprehension and intelligence of different persons, and different species of life. The amount and degree of knowledge that we are able to bring to bear upon and use in our daily activities, depends upon the equipments that we carry. If we are possessed of sharp 'Indriyas', or well developed 'Mana', or highly cultivated and purified 'Buddhi', or a very receptive 'Chitta', we have so much the better equipment to draw forth the 'knowledge' inherent in us and put it to use in our worldly activities. Take the case of eagles, who can see far off things; dogs who hear and smell distant

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sounds and faintest smells; fish seeing through water; or flies responding to softest skin sensations. Man's mind is so complex and developed that he is capable of comprehending and solving the subtlest and deepest mysteries of nature, and is ever attempting still greater achievements. The phenomena of psychic trance and 'Yogic Samadhi' reveal even higher and more complex fields where knowledge works. Thus, we observe that knowledge in us and at our disposal, is infinite and limitless, and it is only our mental equipment that sets the limits to what we factually and outwardly are, at a particular stage.

The very definition of the word 'Education' makes this point clear. Education means drawing out, in other words, education consists of bringing forth, out of the depths of knowledge inside us, all that can be possibly supported and assimilated by our mental equipment. And the only limit to the 'drawing out' process is the capacity of our equipment, because the source of that knowledge is limitless, as we shall see later on. This point can be well illustrated by taking the case of a sculptor or potter. The sculptor makes as many statues out of marble as his tools and his skill make it possible for him, while the marble itself contains within it the potentiality of an infinite number of models and statues. The same is the case about a potter making different kinds of earthen vessels and toys and statues, out of the earth in his possession. There is no limit to the shapes and sizes and variety of the earthen-ware that can be moulded out of earth. The limit lies in the mental equipment of the potter and his tools. Similarly, knowledge, infinite knowledge, is our nature, our birth-right; but what we seem to possess is only that part of it which is drawn out through the limitations of our mental equipment.

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Summarising the conclusions that we have arrived at in the foregoing two chapters, we note that my 'Self' ('I') is not the body, mind, feelings or emotions; that they all belong to me, but that I am something separate and distinct from them. Not only that; the very existence and activity of all such things depends upon my 'Self', which is deep inside everything, and coordinates, correlates, and coheses all things, like the owner or Master within.

Moreover, we have also observed that my 'Self' has some basic and fundamental characteristics of a positive nature, which are common to all living sentient beings. They are (1) Life (Eternal Existence) and the instinctive urge to be alive, (2) Happiness and the natural affinity with happiness, and (3) Knowledge and the inherent striving for knowledge. Eternal Existence, Happiness, and Knowledge are seen to be our very nature, our true and real being. They are not only the real nature of my 'Self', they are the common heritage of all selves, all 'I's'. And what is more: they are not some things which we can perceive through the senses, they are attributes which are abstract, non-material, supra-physical.

Thus, in our enquiry about the real nature of 'I' we have been led to the inevitable, but (to many a person) astounding conclusion that 'I' am not the flesh and blood, the body and mind, which I am generally supposed to be; but something of quite a different nature and content. Not that the body and mind and all the rest of it do not exist for us. They are very much there with us and of us, as also the bodies and minds of others related or otherwise associated with us. But the real position is now clear, and the vital distinction and separateness of these outer shells, as it were, of the inner reality of 'I' has been brought to light. 'I' am

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not of the nature of a physical or material entity, with thoughts and feelings and emotions, which in their turn are the resultant of physical processes, or environments. 'I' belong to the realm of Spirit, the all-pervading Life, Knowledge, and Bliss. And, this is true not only in regard to human beings, but also about all living sentient beings, down to the lowest animal and tiniest insect. We have already noted how even the lower animals, in common with humans, are possessed of the positive traits of Life, Happiness and Knowledge, although the manifestation of such traits in them is in a subdued form, and limited and elementary in scope. But there is not the least doubt about their having in them the spark of that all-pervading Life or Spirit, which is characterised chiefly by its three main attributes of Eternal Existence, Bliss (or Happiness), and Knowledge.

Before we pass on to investigate more deeply what this "all-pervading Life or Spirit" is, let us turn to an enquiry about physical objects, or Matter as such. We have observed in the preceding paragraph that 'I' is not some thing material or physical, but belongs to the realm of Spirit, the all-pervading Life. It would be right, therefore, at this stage, to have a clear idea of what is meant by Matter. After having obtained a clear picture of what Matter is, we would be in a better position to understand and differentiate between Matter and its so-called opposite Non-Matter, or Spirit, or Life (in highest sense of existence absolute, or Being), or Soul, or whatever other name is preferred.

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III. MATTER

Matter has been variously described and interpreted. In the ancient philosophies and religions of the world, it was very generally known to consist of five elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether (empty space or sky). Hindu philosophical books, though mentioning *Anu*—molecules, and *Pramanu*—atoms, broadly describe matter as consisting of the above five elements, and sometimes as having eight components, and at others 24, and so on, depending upon the point of view of the exponents of different schools of thought. Without going into the details and complexities of the various schools of thought, suffice it to say here that Matter was generally held to be the five elements above-named, and all the other states or things, that arose out of one or more of the five elements. Under such an interpretation, not only the entire field of physical objects, but also sensations, and thoughts, feelings and emotions were shown to be of the nature of Matter. Having their source and direct connection with things material, mental and emotional activities are treated as being of the nature of matter, as opposed to the nature of Spirit.

With the advance of scientific investigation, and knowledge of physics, matter came to have a more precise definition and connotation. Newton, Tyndall, Huxley and other

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physicists described Matter as 'having mass, and weight and occupying space'. It was 'indestructible', it was 'inert', it rested and slept. It appeared in three forms: solids, liquids, and gases. The above description of Matter held the field, till further researches in science brought about a complete revolution in modern scientific thought. The old ideas about matter being 'inert' have gone by the board. It is now seen to possess amazing vitality and vibration. This is how Will Durant puts it: "Here was Electricity: what was this mystical force which, added to Mass, increased its energy, but added nothing to its dimensions and weight? How did it travel along a wire, or through wireless air? And in these electric waves, what was it that moved: atoms, or ether, or nothing? Or the X Ray? What is it that passed through the vacuum or the walls? And in Radium, matter seemed inexhaustibly active; and Atoms, the uncuttable, seemed indefinitely divisible, and every atom became a planetary system of electric charges, moving about nothing more substantial than another electric charge. To what a pass had Matter come as to have lost its mass and weight, and length and breadth and depth, and almost all its sturdy properties. Was Inertia a myth? Could it be that Matter was alive?"[1] Let us here recall the words of some other leading physicists and scientists. Ostwald says 'Matter is merely a form of energy'; Rutherford defines the Atoms as 'units of positive and negative eletricity'; Lodge maintains that 'the electron does not contain a material nucleus in addition to its charge'; Le Bon regards Matter 'as a variety of Energy'.[2] Eddington declares that 'Matter is composed of electrons and protons, i.e. negative and positive electric charges';[3] and this discovery holds the field and

1. *The Pleasures of Philosophy* by Will Durant.
2. *The Evolution of Matter* by G. Le Bon.
3. *The Nature of the Physical World* by A. S. Eddington.

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is the foundation of all physics at present. Matter has got down-graded (or shall we say up-graded) from atom to electrons and protons, which are nothing but electric charges, a variety of energy.

Matter has thus been shown to possess neither mass, nor weight, nor form; it is neither solid, nor liquid, nor gaseous; and even its indestructibility is suspect. In the words of an eminent physicist (Le Bon): "The elements of atom, which are dissociated, are irrevocably lost and destroyed. They lose every quality of matter—even weight. They have vanished in the immensity of Ether. Heat, Electricity, Light, etc. represent the last stages of matter before its disappearance into Ether. Matter, which dissociates, *dematerialises* itself, until it finally returns to the imponderable Ether, whence it seems to have issued".[4] And now if we ask the physicists: what is Ether? we are told "Ether is not a kind of matter—It is non-material" (Professor Eddington).[5] We are thus forcefully reminded of the words of Newton: "O Physics! Preserve me from Meta-Physics". But as Durant puts it "Alas! It can not any more. Movement, energy, vitality are everywhere. We dare not call anything *lifeless*. Physics regrets to report that matter does not exist, and even Ether is a fiction, created to conceal the ignorance of modern science. It is as mystical as a ghost or Soul. Is this Theology restored or a new Christian Science"[6,7]

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4. *Op. cit* (2) by Le Bon.
5. *Op. cit.* (3) by Eddington.
6. *Op. cit.* (1) by Will Durant.
7. 'Evolution of Matter' and 'extension of biological concepts to the whole of Nature' and similar other theories regarding Matter, refer to (among others):
   (a) *Mechanism, Life and Personality* by J. S. Haldane.
   (b) *Science and the Modern World* by A. N. Whitehead.
   (c) *Experience and Nature* by John Dewey.
   (d) *Possible Worlds* by J. B. S. Haldane.

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From the foregoing analytical description of matter, confirmed by the testimony of eminent scientists, it would be amply clear that the distinction between Matter and Non-Matter (or Life or Spirit) is very thin. It could indeed be asserted even on the basis of latest scientific research, that Matter as such hardly has any real existence, and what appears to be and is called Matter, is in truth and essence Life or Spirit. One may be tempted to redefine Matter, so as to retain the supremacy of Physics and other physical sciences, and describe Matter in terms hitherto foreign to physics, and more akin to Meta-Physics and domain of Spirit or Soul. But nothing can undo or gainsay the central and basic fact, which has now been sharply realised, that the ultimate reality is Non--Material—call it Spirit, Life or Soul, may be some would call it Ether. All round us in this infinite universe, what appears to us as of material or physical content is in truth nothing but an aspect or facet of the Spiritual reality, which underlies and permeates everything, and seems to assume various forms and shapes and qualities. For, it is only what our five 'Gyan-Indriyas' (defined earlier) tell us about the world that becomes the fact for us for the time; and the 'Indriyas' function in their own limited, habitual and well-defined ways, bringing in varying and often contradictory sensations, without the stamp of ultimate authority and veracity on them.

For instance, the eyes of an eagle or an owl convey something very much more and different from what we humans get through our eyes. The nose of an Alsatian Police dog carries smells to it which are simply non-existent to our smelling organism. Fish see through deepest waters which is impossible for man, or even an eagle. Likewise the working of Indriyas of hearing, smelling and touch. Even in the case of man, the variety of responses, and rela-

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tive strength, of the different Indriyas are very different from one man to another, and changing from time to time, and age to age, even in the same individual.

It may here be said that man makes use of high-precision and super-sensitive instruments for observing the facts and phenomena of the world, and thus obtains correct data from such observations. But, it has to be remembered that all his instruments are produced and used for the purpose of well-defined observations or experiments, which he has in view, with certain hypothesis and basic concepts. That is exactly why, from time to time, revolutionary jolts are given to man's thinking and 'discoveries', and whole series of concepts and theories, and so-called data, are completely reversed or modified in the light of a new discovery or observation of nature, having been made at random, or by accident, or a stroke of inspired vision. This clearly shows how unreliable even our best instruments can be, and can at best, lead us to the observation of only parts or facets of the true nature of things round us. We have only to revert to the findings of modern physics itself to see how faulty our observations can be. What we knew as hard, solid, inert objects, through our Indriyas, as aided by scientific instruments, are in reality so many charges of energy, going round and round another charge of energy, in the midst of an unknown and indefinable Ether—which is anything but matter.

Let us now leave Matter here, merging and disappearing into energy as it is; and proceed to study and try to understand what that Energy, the Life, or the basic Reality is. An understanding of that Basic Reality will then also provide us a clue to the Knowledge of who 'I' am—what the 'I' really means and stands for. As we have already noted

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in the earlier parts of this study, 'I' is not something physical or material, but is of the nature of Spirit or Life. In fact, we now realise that to call anything by the name of matter is a myth and a misnomer. While that is the truth about all the things in the wide world, there are some special features about 'I', which strike us as being highly subtle and distinct from the rest of the world around us. So, now we proceed to study the very heart and crux of the whole question: What is Life (or Soul or Spirit)? Who and what is the 'I'? And what is the relationship between Life and 'I'? And, moreover, such a study would be incomplete without considering also the relationship of the universe with 'I', and with the all-pervading Life or universal Spirit.

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IV. LIFE

We have considered and discussed Matter and Non-Matter (Life or Spirit) well enough in the earlier parts of this study to comprehend that there is hardly a basic difference between the two. Matter does not seem to possess an existence of its own as separate and distinct from Non-Matter—which is the all-pervading Life or Energy. It comes forth and makes its appearance in a variety of names and forms, but the moment we start analysing and dissecting it, it shows up its true and real nature, and the names and forms which had been assumed begin to merge and disappear in Life (Energy). We are thus led to the irresistible conclusion that basically there are not two, but one single entity at the root of all existence, and that is Life (in the broadest sense) or Spirit. It is that Life which always was, is, and will be. It is that Life which appears to assume an infinite variety of names and forms and activities, which we call by the name of world or universe, and all that it contains. And, it is that Life again in which the whole of this universe with all its contents, individually and collectively, merges and disappears, shedding away its assumed names and forms. Thus, we find that that Infinite, all-pervading Life or Spirit reveals itself in its three fundamental aspects: (1) Creation and growth, (2) Maintenance

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and Preservation, and (3) Disintegration and Dissolution. This three-fold activity is ceaselessly going on from an infinite past, and is bound to continue on to an infinite future, due to the very nature of Life—which is infinite. The entire creation, past, present and future, is in a state of constant flux and change. All the names and forms of which the universe is composed of are transitory and ever-changing, right from the tiniest cell and microbe to the mightiest and stupendous stars and galaxies. It is only Life (Spirit) which stands unmoved, changeless and stable, and manifests itself infinitely, in an infinite variety of ways. As Life is infinite, so is its manifestation, Nature, infinite. It must, however, be noted that while this *process of manifestation,* in its three-fold aspect, is eternal and infinite, the *manifested creation,* bound and limited as it is in name and form, and time and space, is finite and transitory. And the reason is not far to see. Life or Spirit is the basic Reality or Truth underlying all; while the manifested, so-called physical world (inclusive of mental, emotional, and astral states), is only an illusive appearance, an erroneous assumption of our senses—as shown earlier in this study.

It is an incontrovertible axiom that a thing which is not true and real can not have a permanent existence; and likewise, when a thing is true and real, its existence is permanent. Now, putting this axiom in converse, we arrive at the obvious conclusion that if a thing has a permanent existence, its nature is true and real, while all such things that do not have a permanent existence, or in other words that make an appearance, stay for a time (long or short), and then disintegrate and disappear, are not true and real. Truth and reality is imperishable, while untruth and unreality is doomed to ultimate exposure by its dissolution,

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decay and death. *The touchstone of Reality is its permanent, substantive, and independent existence.*

Let us illustrate this proposition by a few common examples. Suppose you are walking in a garden late in the evening, when the daylight is waning. You come across a rope lying in front of your path, in a zig-zag manner, and on account of the failing light, you take it to be a snake. Immediately you jump aside, take up a stick or stone, and hit it. Someone passing by and noticing your activities, happens to possess a torch and illuminates the whole scene under its light. The assumed snake, which was so real to you before the enlightenment from the torch, disappears at once leaving before your eyes the true image of the rope, which the assumed snake was in truth and reality. Now, in case what you saw was in truth a snake, no amount of observations by the sight or touch or otherwise, would have led to the negation or extinction of the real snake. Untruth has thus no lasting existence, and disappears at the touch of knowledge, while truth exists permanently and independently.

Take another illustration. Retiring for sleep one night, you start dreaming that you and a couple of your friends, make a plan for a leopard-hunting trip in the Himalayas. It is decided to start for Dehradun by train, and accordingly the three of you take a taxi, reach the railway station, and travel by train upto Dehradun. There, you all go to a local friend's house, have a hurried breakfast, and leave for the jungles in a car. After a long and strenuous search, you all spot a leopard, and fire at it. The wounded leopard pounces on your car, and badly mauls you, inflicting serious injuries to your arms and head. Your friends immediately

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take you away to a hospital, where the doctor decides that the amputation of your arm is necessary for saving your life. You are therefore put on the operation table and the surgeon starts the amputation. At this stage, you wake up from your dream, and for some time you are thoroughly shaken up and frightfully confused. Slowly and gradually, you wake up to realities, and the realisation comes to you that you are safely lying in your bed, with all your limbs and body hale and well, and that all the experiences you were having immediately before waking up, were parts of a mere dream—untrue and unreal. There was no such thing as a hunting trip with your friends, no taxi and train journeys, no leopard and no shootings, and not even a scratch of an injury on your arms or body. Nevertheless, while the dream lasted, all these experiences had a hard real existence for you, causing you pleasures and pains, hopes and frights, and all the other sensations and movements. But, because the whole episode was untrue and unreal, it lasted only that long as the reality and truth did not dawn upon you. And the moment you woke up to the realisation of the truth, on ridding yourself of the unreality of the dream, you found your true self and real state. Thus, again we see that untruth has no real and permanent existence, and vanishes at the first touch of Reality and Truth. This is indeed a truism, and applies equally and forcefully to our broader and larger experiences in the waking life in the world. But this matter of our waking life and its experiences shall be discussed at a later stage.

It may well be asked here: Why does the all-pervading Spirit or Life create so many and an infinite variety of forms and shapes and activities? Being itself true and Real and Permanent, why does it appear in un-real and imperma-

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nent forms? How does this manifested universe come into being, bereft as it is of permanence and stability, from a source which is ever-existent and unchanging—the basic Life or energy being the same everywhere and in every thing, while its manifested creation is constantly undergoing the three changes of creation, growth, and decay and death?

Before we attempt to answer these questions, we have to sound a note of caution. The subject-matter of these enquiries is the transcendental and basic Reality, underlying all that is known or understood. The manifested universe, the facts and phenomena of nature, and even the states and activities of mind, are subject—in varying degrees—to the observation and examination by the human mind. But, here we are going into the region of the supra-sensual and the super-human, the source and basis of not only all that is known or can be known, but also of the vehicle of all knowledge—the knowing mind. Such an one being the subject of our study, we cannot make a direct scrutiny or factual examination of it by our enquiring mind, for the simple reason that the Life or Reality, which we want to study, is behind and above the mind. Leaving alone, for the present, the supra-mental experiences in a state of 'Yogic Samadhi' (spiritual trance), wherein a direct glimpse of Reality is obtainable, we have necessarily and ordinarily to proceed in our study through indirect observations and rational deductions from the facts and phenomena of the manifested universe, in order to arrive at some comprehension of the basic Reality, the all-embracing Life.

Now, let us take the questions, and be clear about their implication. The very first thing that must be noted is that the universe is not a *Creation* of the Spirit or Life

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It is its own manifestation, one of the forms in which it appears. Because, if we presuppose a creator creating the universe, we are at once up against the question: "creating out of what?" And, as we have now come to understand, there is no second to that all-pervading, all-embracing Spirit, in other words, there is no duality in essence. "He alone was, and became the many." Moreover, the notion of duality (or plurality) gives rise to further questions and corollaries which are untenable and contradictory to the facts of nature and phenomena of the universe. It is only Monism, a single entity being at the base, and root of all, that correctly and fully explains the facts and phenomena around us, while dualism creates confusions and contradictions, and leaves a lot unexplained. As we shall elaborate later on, the concept of one Life or Spirit, projecting itself into various shapes and forms and activities in manifesting itself, but all the while retaining its purity and singleness, explains all the facts and features of the universe. The entire creation being the manifestation of the one underlying Spirit, there is no room or reason for duality or plurality. Hence the notion of a creator creating the creation, is untenable. Similarly, the question of knower, knowing the known, does not arise. They are not separate, one from the other. They belong to one whole single entity, wherefrom all this diversity emerges, and wherein ultimately it merges.

Thus, the question of the universe in all its diversity, having been created by the one Spureme Reality or Spirit is negatived, and we arrive at the conclusion that only the one Life Spirit was, and became the many. It may be said to have projected itself outwards, activised itself, and became the many. How and why it did so, are questions which can not be dealt with precisely and authoritatively by our rea-

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soning mind, for the simple reason, as already mentioned, that we are dealing with and questioning, the activities and states of an entity, which is beyond the human mind, which is the source and power behind the mind. But, from a rational and analytical study and appraisal of all the facts and phenomena around us, we are driven to the conclusion that "All this is He,". the universe is in reality the Spirit in manifestation. To the next question: why is all this manifestation? the answer is: it is the *nature* of the Spirit—the supreme truth and reality—to project itself and be manifested as many. Look into the very definition of the word, Nature. It means, not only the "essential and inherent qualities and characteristics of a person or thing", but also "the facts and phenomena of the universe, and the power behind it". The same definition is implied in the corresponding Sanskrit and Persian words: प्रकृति (Prakriti), and قدرت (Qudrat), respectively. Thus, we find that there is a very close affinity between Nature (which is the manifested universe) and the inherent characteristic and quality of the Spirit, i.e., its Nature, to manifest the universe. The two are practically identical. Nature (manifestation) and the underlying Reality or Spirit, are essentially not two things, they are really two aspects of the same entity, one being the outer everchanging aspect, and the other being the inner, basic, and stable aspect, or Reality. The Spirit, the one Life, underlies and pervades the universe, but does not exhaust and end itself in that process. In its essence and singleness it remains unaffected and unchanged. Though the universe, with all its diversity and variegated content, goes on changing and whirling in time and space, the Reality at the base is unmoved and unspent. Manifestation is only a feature or characteristic of the Spirit, not its definition or

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its real face or essence. It is definable, infinite. Though the universe, wholly and in all time and space, is a projection from the Spirit, and bound to the spirit, the spirit is not universe in truth and essence, and not bound by it. Let us here take a few examples, to illustrate and elucidate this concept, the basic truth. But be it noted, that the examples are meant merely as explanatory and illustrative, and are not to be taken as a complete and literal exposition of the underlying and all-pervading Reality, or as an attempt to define it.

Look at the Jasmine or Rose flower—how it throws out its perfumes all round, filling up the whole space in its vicinity with its sweet smell. But the Jasmine or Rose flower is making no movement or effort to spread its perfume, or even to emit it. The flower and its perfume go together, and wherever the flower is, the perfume must appear and emerge. The perfume is bound up with the flower and co-existent with it. It is the Nature of the flower—to emit its smell.

Take another case. The sun in the high heavens is shining in all its glory, spreading out its light and heat in all the spheres. Its innumerable rays are shooting forth, carrying light and heat, and creating life and activity all round. The sun, by itself, is unmoved and unchanged, and is making no efforts to spread its heat and light. They are emanating and spreading out because they are the inherent and constant characteristic of the sun. Heat and light are the Nature of the sun—bound up with it. They must spread out from the sun.

More examples could be advanced, but from the two

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given above, it should be enough to understand the relationship between the one all-pervading Spirit and the universe. It is the Nature of the Spirit to manifest itself in all the diversity of the universe, to emanate the infinite forms and shapes and activities, but all the while itself remaining unchanged and stable. It requires no effort on its part to be manifested and appear as many, in the same way as a flower does not make any effort to emit its smell, or the sun to spread its rays of heat and light. Where the flower or the sun is, the smell and heat/light respectively, must be. Likewise, as the Spirit, the infinite being and Reality is, was, and will be, so must the manifestation of universe be now, and in the past and future. It is the nature of the Spirit—of the eternal Life.

One other question now remains to be answered, and that is: Why does this stable, permanent and unchanging Reality, the eternal Life, appear in ever-changing and impermanent and hence unreal, forms and shapes and activities of the universe? This question goes to the very heart of the matter, and its answer will have a bearing on the universe in the past and future. It is the Nature of the Spirit—of the prehending Reality.

We have already discussed earlier in this study that Truth and Reality are permanent and stable, while that which is fleeting, ever-changing, and perishing is not True or the Real. Now, look at the world around. Its chief and prominent characteristic is change and instability. Everything is in the process of transition and flux—appearing, staying for a time, and disappearing. Change and impermanence are the hall-mark of the universe. It is all a cluster of names and forms and attributes, and they are inexorably and ceaselessly speeding from birth to death, from appearance

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into disappearance. Such being the state of the universe, it is but natural to ask: Why does it not end up altogether? Wherefrom is the appearance—and whereto is the disappearance? And we are driven to the very natural conclusion that the "Wherefrom"—the source, and the "Whereto" —the end, must be imperishable, permanent and infinite. Although each and every thing in the universe, in the past, present, and the future, is subject to the immutable law of change and extinction, yet this *process* of 'appearing and disappearing', birth and death, is ever-continuous, in infinite time and space. While things in the manifested universe are perishable, the manifestation as such, this ceaseless and interminable process of manifestation, is constant. While the actors change, and the scenes change, and the stories change, the drama continues infinitely. The waters of the Ganges or the Rhine are coming and going, but the rivers Ganges or Rhine by themselves are there from times immemorial and staying on stable and unaffected by the constantly changing waters. The above illustrations give us a figurative description of the process of manifestation which is permanent, as opposed to the parts and contents of the manifestation, which are constantly changing, appearing and disappearing.

From the above arguments, we are led to the logical and natural enquiry as to what constitutes the basic difference between the process of manifestation, and manifestation as such. Now, let us observe and analyse the two. What is Manifestation—the universe around us? It is nothing but the ever-changing names and forms and attributes and activities, spread out in, and bound by, time and space. And what is the process of manifestation? It is the beginningless and endless, ever-continuing, state of Being, the pure and absolute Existence, which appears in such an in-

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finite variety, although in its essence it is pure, changeless and unaffected by the variety of its appearance. In truth, it is not even correct to call it a process. It has been called a process only in the sense that it is an ever-continuing, never-ending, *goings-on*, a state of ceaseless *Be-ing*. It is really and essentially a state—not a physical or mental or emotional, or any other state as we generally understand it in common worldly parlance. It is just Existence—pure and absolute. It is the base, the live field, which sustains and encompasses all the variegated and fleeting names and forms and activities, which constitute the universe. It just is, was, and will be. It is beyond time and space, and unbound by them. It is eternal and infinite Life. And it is just that 'Wherefrom' and 'Whereto', of this manifested universe, the imperishable, ever-continuing, infinite Be-ing or Existence absolute. And what is more: it is not only the source and end of the universe, it is also the real basis and substance (so to say) of all that is manifested. Being permanent and changeless it is the Reality—the Truth; and all the names and forms in which it appears and is manifested, are untrue and unreal, for the obvious reason that they are ever-changing, unstable and perishable. They do not stand the test of having an independent, substantive and permanent existence.

Now, let us examine this paradox—the unchanging appearing as ever-changing, the imperishable assuming perishable forms, the One manifested as many. This is the last question that we had asked ourselves.

We have already noticed (earlier in this chapter) that to appear as many, to assume multiplicity and diversity is the *Nature* of the Infinite Life or Real Existence. Without undergoing any change whatever in itself, the Reality or the

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absolute Being seems to manifest itself in variety and change. And going deeper in the matter and examining it more closely, what do we find? It is only names and forms and their related activities which are appearing and disappearing, manifesting and perishing, while the underlying Life or Existence absolute, persists and continues unabated and unchanged. And further, what are names and forms? They are the creations or assumptions of our 'Indriyas', 'Mana', and 'Buddhi'; and we have already (earlier in this study) found, on a critical analysis and scientific investigation, that the observations and inferences of our 'Indriyas', 'Mana', and 'Buddhi', are unreliable and erroneous (refer to Chapter III of this study on Matter). Thus, we note that the very structure and content of the manifested universe is nothing but names and forms and their related activities, and they are entirely based upon and depending for their very existence on our 'Indriyas', 'Mana', and 'Buddhi'; and the 'Indriyas', 'Mana', and 'Buddhi', in their turn are found to be unreliable. Therefore, we are logically forced to the conclusion that the ever-changing, ever-perishing diversity that we (our 'Indriyas', 'Mana', and 'Buddhi') find in the universe is deceptive, and has been erroneously assumed. Really and truly, it does not exist.

Let us here take a few examples to help us in understanding this phenomenon—this apparent paradox. But be it clearly noted again that examples are, at best, only illustrative, and not to be taken too literally, or as being completely explanatory or definitive.

Observe the mighty oceans. They appear to us as waves, and ripples, bubbles and drops, tides and currents. The waves are following one after the other, the tides are rising and falling, and there is a constant movement and

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change going on. On other rare occasions, it is all calm and serene and unruffled. Such are the aspects in which the seas appear to us. There is a more or less unceasing movement and change, and yet paradoxically as it seems, our idea and concept of the ocean is that of an unchanging and stable mass of water. In spite of the movement we attribute stability, and in direct opposition to the visible change, we ascribe permanence to the ocean. Why is that so? For the obvious and simple reason that the movement and change in the ocean are only a superficial and unreal aspect of the ocean. Its real aspect, its basic and substantive character, is water-en-masse. Waves and tides and currents are coming and going, appearing and disappearing, but the ocean is there unchanged and unaffected, bearing and sustaining all the flux and variety, and only assuming so many forms and shapes. And, what are the waves etc. in reality and substance? They are nothing but so many names and forms which the water—the ocean in reality—takes up and manifests itself in. The waves etc. arise in the water, stay as such in the water, and after a while disappear in the water. There is in them, no permanence, no substance (other than water), and no independent existence of their own. They are there before us only so long as they last, bereft of substance and reality, merely a fleeting name and form ascribed to their real source and substance. To one who knows, they are just water and water alone, the names and forms being only fleeting and unreal appearances. He does not deny or ignore them, but he also does not fail to know and ever to remember, their perishable nature and illusive appearance on the one hand, and the real substance and essential nature on the other.

As in the above illustration of the ocean in relation to its waves, tides, currents etc., so, in a figurative similar

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way, in the case of eternal Life in relation to the universe, the fundamental point to be noted is that the latter in its entirety is just an appearance or manifestation of the former, and utterly inseparable from the former. But, while the ocean, and likewise the Eternal Life, is stable, permanent, and unchanging in its real aspect—the waves and tides etc., similarly the immense diversity of the universe, is fleeting, ever-changing, and disintegrating. The ocean assumes all the various forms and names and movements of the waves etc. but remains unaffected in its essential nature, by their appearance and disappearance. Similarly, the One Eternal Life or Spirit manifests itself in all the names and forms and activities of the universe, but in its own real aspect, it is always one and single, unchanging and imperishable. The names and forms in both cases, arise out of, and wholly depend for their very existence on, the ocean and Eternal Life respectively; while the latter are independent of them and have a real and stable existence of their own.

Take another illustration. Suppose you have a dream, in which you find yourself taking part in the marriage celebrations of a friend's son. You, along with your wife and children, have arrived at your friend's house, which is full of gaily dressed men and women and children; and music, eating and drinking is in full swing. You are cordially received by the hosts, and partake of the sumptuous feast offered to you; and after chatting with your hosts and other guests there, you accompany the marriage party which leaves in a procession of cars for the bride's house. Musical bands and fireworks and illuminations are part of the marriage procession, and by slow stages, you all arrive at the bride's house. There again, you meet a crowd of people, chief amongst them being the bride's parents, who welcome your

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party with all honours. The bride-groom steps out of his flower-bedecked car, steps on to a specially erected and decorated platform, where the bride, in beautiful attire and costly jewellery, walks up, accompanied by her mother and other ladies, and puts a garland of flowers round the bride-groom's neck. Dinner follows, in which the whole party joins with full gusto, and thereafter the religious ceremonies start, and the bride and bride-groom are solemnly married. The newly-weds and their parents and relations are the recipients of congratulations and felicitations, and presents are offered to the happy couple, and slowly and in groups the guests begin to depart, and you too come back home. While you are changing your clothes for retiring to bed, your dream ends and you get awake, because, just at the time your little baby, lying in a cradle beside your bed, starts crying. With a rude shock and suddenness, all your pleasant and bright experiences of the dream are instantly dispelled on waking up, as being unreal, and the consciousness of the reality of your being in bed, takes up their place.

Let us here examine the characteristics of dream. The first and most important thing about dream is its unreal nature, and as an inevitable corollary, its perishability and lack of permanence. It is truly there with all its content and diversity while it lasts, and appears quite real, but only till you wake up. The moment you get awake, the entire spectacle, the whole edifice, crumbles and vanishes into nothingness, leaving behind the reality—yourself, the dreamer. The next thing to note about the dream is that its entire basis and whole existence is through your mind ('Mana' as defined earlier) and in your mind. Whilst there is diversity and multiplicity in its unfoldment, there is complete and unmixed singleness and one-ness at its source and base.

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It is your mind and your mind alone that, in a way, projects itself in the whole dream, with all its contents and movements and experiences.

Now, examine and analyse the dream described above, or for that matter—any dream. It is patently clear that all that you saw or heard or smelt or tasted or touched, or otherwise experienced, was wholly and solely the work of your mind—a sort of a transformation of your mind. That one single unit of your mental make-up, the 'Mana', had created, out of its stored-up stock of sensory, emotional, and other experiences in 'Chit' (the other unit of your mind, defined earlier), all the contents and movements and experiences of your dream phenomenon. The entire dream was nothing but your mind. Even you yourself, as appearing in the dream, were nothing but the creation of that dream, because the moment the dream vanished, you of that dreamland, with all the marriage clothes, and gay feeling, and stomachful of sumptuous feasts, vanished, giving place to your real personality lying in bed, attired in your night-clothes, with probably an empty stomach and a load of anxieties and tensions. Much more so is the fact of other persons and things in the dream being nothing other than your mind. Not only that. It is *your* mind and your mind alone, and nothing but the *mind,* that has projected itself in your dream, that has assumed out of its own self, through its own activity and initiative, the whole edifice of the dream. Your mind alone is the sole root and base of your dream, its entire content, and ultimately its seat of dissolution. In other words, the dream arises in the mind, remains and develops in the mind, and vanishes in the mind, with no second, through the three stages of its existence. Speaking more specifically, all the women, men, and children, with all their attires, talk and movements were the images forming

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in your mind; the houses, cars, tables, chairs, the illuminations and fireworks with their lights and sounds and smells, were your mind; the feasting and drinking and their tastes, and pleasures and displeasures derived from them, all joys and sorrows, all pairs of opposites, were just the transformation of your mind; the ground on which you moved, and even the air you breathed, was in your mind and of your mind. In fact, whatever was or could be in the dream was your mind's working and expression, and nothing else, and of none other. Such is the phenomenon of the dream: Singleness (or Monism) at the base, throughout its whole existence, and ultimately at its dissolution; while at the same time, there is an appearance of diversity and multiplicity in its unfoldment (or manifestation).

Let us now take the other characteristic of the dream—its transience, its instability, and its unreality. There is hardly any room or reason for adducing arguments to prove the above traits of the dream. Your own experience of the dream, and that of dreams anywhere and of whomsoever, thoroughly proves them. The very name of dream signifies unreality. But let it not be ignored that while the dream lasts, it is all too real, and too true to be denied. It is only when the dreamer wakes up, and becomes conscious of his true and real state, that the dream sharply and instantly collapses and disappears, giving place to the reality—the realisation of the one dreamer behind it.

One word more, and we have done with the phenomenon of the dream in the present context. If it is asked: why does a dream occur?, the reply is: simply because it is one of the characteristics of the mind (the nature inherent in it) to occasionally project itself and assume diversity and multiplicity, by drawing upon its own reserves of

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stored-up sensations and perceptions, and emotional and other experiences. In that state (of dream), it becomes the many, the diversity emerges out of itself, and after a time merges back into it, without causing any real change or difference in the mind, except a faint and vanishing memory. The dreamer remains unaffected and untouched. Dreams depend on, and rise and fall in the mind, but the mind is independent of them and has its own stable existence. Mind is the real and fundamental aspect of this phenomenon whereas dream is its unreal and fleeting aspect.

From the above illustration of dream phenomenon, which has been described at some length, we are able to get an idea of the Eternal phenomenon of this fleeting and ever-changing universe, emanating from the supreme, all-pervading Life, and appearing in its three-fold aspects of emerging, staying on and developing, and re-emerging back into its primordial, unchanging and everlasting source and base—the Life Eternal, the Infinite and Absolute Being. As in the dream, the mind, so in manifestation, the Eternal Life becomes the many, and appears in an infinite variety and number of forms and names and activities. It is a characteristic of the mind to enter into a dream-state, and likewise it is the nature of the Eternal Life to manifest itself as the universe, without in either case causing any change in its reality or identity. The variety and multiplicity is there in both cases; the appearance, the change, the disappearance of names and forms etc. are truly there in both cases while they last; but in reality and essence there is no change, no birth or death. The basic reality is unmoved and unaffected by the fluctuations of its assumed appearances. And very noteworthy is the fact (common to both the dream and the manifested universe) that as soon as a

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person is awakened the dream vanishes—lock, stock and barrel, leaving in its place the consciousness of the one unaffected and untouched mind. So likewise, the universe, with all its variety and change, ceases to appear true and real, at the realisation of the oneness and eternal existence of the Reality—the Absolute Infinite Be-ing. What appeared so true and real before awaking and realisation of truth, becomes untrue and unreal at the dawn of Real Knowledge. But more about this later.

In the foregoing pages, we have discussed and analysed, subject to the limitations of human reasoning and intellectual effort, what Life—the all-pervading, Eternal Being or Spirit is. We have observed that Matter, in the ultimate analysis, is hardly, if at all, distinguishable or separate from Life. We have also noticed that the Universe is nothing but fleeting and perishing names and forms and activities, which are all a manifestation and assumed appearance of the underlying and immanent Reality—the Eternal Life; that the entire universe, with all its content and attributes, throughout infinite time and infinite space, emerges out of Life, develops, and stays in Life, and merges back into Life; and that this three-fold process, or more correctly speaking this three-fold aspect of appearance or Being, is infinite, because the underlying and inherent Life is infinite and eternal. We have also seen, through logical arguments and illustrations, that manifestation of the Life as universe, the appearance of the One as many, the Real, the Eternal, the Infinite and Immutable taking on changeable, perishable, and unreal forms, is the nature or one of the characteristics of the Eternal and Supreme Being, the all-pervading Life. While discussing Life, we have had to discuss and examine the broad physical and metaphysical features and characteristics of Universe from a philosophical point of view,

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because it is the only medium available to our reasoning and observing mind to attempt an understanding of the super-conscious and supra-mental entity—Life, the source, the basic substance (in a sense); the All—of all that is, was and will be.

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V. UNIVERSE

Now, before we pass on to an examination and discussion of the relationship between that Eternal Life and 'I', the Self, let us take another look at the Universe. But, it must noted at the outset that this is no thesis or work of research on physics or atomic physics, astronomy or geology, or biology or chemistry, or even cosmogony. All such sciences pursue the studies and examination of Nature—Manifestation as such, and confine themselves to an investigation of its contents, its characteristics, and its laws. And no wonder, such deep studies, coupled with mathematical precision and scientific instruments, lead many an inspired worker in those fields to the very roots and base of this (so-called) physical world, to the ultimate regions of metaphysics dealing with the living spiritual foundation of this Universe. This is one of the methods of approach to the unravelling of the great mystery of this universe. The other is the philosophic approach. Both are worthy of merit, and have each their own achievements and consolations. We, on our part, are attempting to investigate and comprehend the mystery of Life, Universe, and 'I', from a philosophic point of view, adapting the methods of synthesis and analysis, logical deduction and induction and ratiocination, while at the same time keeping in view the researches and conclusions of modern scientific and philosophical thought.

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The very first thing that strikes us about this vast and variegated universe is its immeasurable expanse in space and its indefinable span in time. It is there and here and everywhere, from times immemorial. There is no space and no time imaginable where and when it could not be. Even the observing and thinking mind of Man might have come into existence at a much later stage, according to some biological and evolutionary theories, man himself according to them, being a product of evolutionary processes inherent in the Universe. Then, there are astronomers and geologists and physicists and other eminent scientists, collating and postulating data, and propounding various conclusions and theories regarding the birth and growth of the universe, its content and structure, and the trends and laws governing its existence and development.

Now, whatever be the various theories and conclusions of workers in different fields of science and philosophy, with all their differences and contradictions one with the other, and new and newer facts and theories coming into being with the advances in research, there are some salient points on which there is unanimity (or near-unanimity) in the conclusions of most eminent thinkers, regarding the nature of the universe.

It is agreed to by all that the universe is infinite—infinite in time and space and the variety of its content. No date can be truly given as to its birth, nor a date fixed for its end. Similarly, none has been, or will be, able to point to where it starts in space, and which is its ultimate frontier and boundary. And the infinite variety in the bosom of the universe is simply staggering—each blade of grass, drop of water, and grain of sand being different from the other, to say nothing of the more developed creatures and species.

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Besides, let it be noted, that this imponderable variety in the universe is not merely confined to one time or one space. There is infinite variety in the infinitude of creation for an infinite period of time, over an infinite expanse of space.

Such is the grand spectacle; and with all that is coupled the constant element of change and motion, growth and decay—an interminable cycle of birth, development, and death, and again birth to death *ad infinitum*. The puzzel and the great mystery, however, lies in the fact that, in spite of all this inexorable and universal change, this relentless process of integration and disintegration, the universe as such continues unabated, exists eternally, without a break or pause. Now, this poses a question: this mystery, of the ever-changing and ever-perishing, continuing to exist eternally and as a correlated whole, must needs be explored and explained.

In the earlier chapter, we have already touched upon this question, and we would now attempt only to further elucidate the matter. Let us start with two questions, which go to the root of this mystery. The first question is—what is changing, in other words what is meant by saying 'everything is in a state of flux, and motion, integrating and disintegrating, appearing and perishing? The other question then follows—what is permanent, in other words what is it that has a ceaseless and unbroken existence in infinite time and infinite space?

Both the above questions can be approached and tackled from two standpoints—the analytic and the synthetic. Adopting the analytic approach, we commence an examination and investigation of the various elements, units,

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and parts of the universe that come under observation from time to time, and place to place. We then piece our observations and conclusions together and form theories, which stand or fall in the light of new and later observations and theories. The units and parts of the universe being infinite in number, as the universe itself is infinite, there is no end and can be no end, to this sort of analytic examination and research and theorising. But, all the same, one fact emerges and stands out in the midst of all the infinite variety and flux. Whatsoever comes under observation and examination, be it of the mineral world or vegetable world, or whether it be fish, insect, bird or beast, or man ("the roof and crown of things"), and whatever else that can be perceived, thought or imagined, they all are but names and forms, and their related attributes and activities. Therefore, when we say the universe is in a state of change and motion, we really mean that the objects of our observation and examination, which are nothing but names and forms etc., are constantly undergoing change. All investigation and research has necessarily to be carried on over the field of the observed parts and units of the Universe, (that which is manifested), through the analytical method of approach, and the one overall common feature of our observations is change, growth and decay; a ceaseless cyclic movement of birth and death. The genera and species and sub-species and the compounds and elements etc. are numberless, and their connotations and denotations and properties are likewise innumerable. But one feature, the one inescapable characteristic of all is their change and transitoriness. Thus, we arrive at the conclusion that the universe, as manifested before us in the shape of *forms and names and attributes*, is constantly forming, growing, and unforming and re-forming, that everything appears, stays for a time, and disappears. But a very important and noteworthy result of the latest

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investigations even through the analytical approach is the realisation that there is a stable, though indefinable basis, an ever-present and inherent force or energy that is universal and ultimate in all things—whatever be their names and forms. Refer, in this connection, to chapter III (ante) on Matter. All investigations and research lead to the conclusion that Energy is at the root and base of all things; and that Energy is not matter, but the ultimate phase of so-called matter, in its final analysis. One may call it Energy, or Spirit or Life, but there is no doubt that it is not of the nature of Matter, as it is defined and understood. So, even through the analytical approach we arrive at last at the hard (or call it the subtlest) core, the real base of all manifestation—the ever-present, fundamental, and unchanging reality behind and beneath all its names and forms i.e. Life.

So, the two questions that were posed in the beginning have been answered through the analytical method thus: (1) It is the *names and forms and their related attributes,* which constitute the manifested universe, that are in a state of constant change, and (2) It is *Energy or Eternal Life,* which is at the root and base of the manifested universe, and that has a permanent and unbroken existence in all time and space.

Before proceeding on to the conclusions that the second approach, the synthetic approach, draws from this mystery of the universe, let us first note one more fundamental result of our investigations under the analytical method of approach just concluded. All observations and research, all experiments and findings, reveal the existence of *laws* governing the entire universe, from its minutest parts and segments on to the biggest and most developed and complicated forms

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and units. Everything and every part of everything, is subject to certain laws, and is behaving in all its phases and aspects in a disciplined and prescribed manner. In all the three stages, of birth, growth and death the whole universe, with its entire content of big or small, is governed by laws. There may be some instances in which the mind of man and his research uptodate, has not so far been able to clearly grasp, formulate or define the law. But the overwhelming evidence of the prevalence and operation of laws all over the field of nature, the universe around us, drives us to the irresistible conclusion that law, and operation of law, is fundamental, and universal. As a matter of fact, the very basic factor and essential pre-requisite of all research and experiment is the presumption that every thing moves and exists according to fixed rules and laws. It would not be too much to say that the whole manifestation is an operation of laws, which are being revealed by and by to the assiduous and penetrating labours of scientists and thinkers. And, further, the laws are not only universal in their sweep, they are immutable in their operation. There is an unerring and unfailing reaction to each action, an inescapable effect of each cause, a well-defined growth and development of each process set in motion. Laws are universal and they are immutable. The whole universe is under the supreme governance of unalterable laws.

Let us now see where the synthetic approach leads us to, what it reveals regarding this mystery of the universe. The diversity, the change, the perishability of all things faces us here too. The play of the twin forces of becoming and unbecoming, integration and disintegration, stares us all round. If there is heat, it is followed by cold; if there is expansion, contraction comes in its wake. Every rise has a fall, and the fall has a rise again, and so on. Birth, growth,

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decay and death, are inextricably bound together, and pursue one another *ad infinitum*. The interplay of opposites is the order of the day. The whole scene before us is in a state of constant flux and movement where the opposites are ceaselessly chasing each other, and where one is forced to the conclusion that the very appearance of a positive force or feature has in it the roots of its opposite—the negative force or feature, and these two forces appear to be locked up in unending rivalry. Such an unending competition or interplay of these two paramount forces naturally leads to an infinite continuance of the scene and field of their operations—which is this universe. From infinity to infinity, in all time and space, this interplay is going on in this infinite universe. But the enquiring mind, the seeker of truth, is not wholly satisfied with this explanation, and does not, and can not, stop short here. He goes deeper into the mystery, and seeks a solution, an answer to the other question: how and why is this interplay of opposites, this ever-present and unending operation of the two opposing forces kept going indefinitely? How do they arise, whence do they spring forth, and what is it that holds them together? If it is a circle, where is the centre? If these are waves, what is the base? These ever continuing appearances and disappearances must have a substantive and stable nucleus to make it possible for the subsequent and infinite appearances and disappearances coming into play. And further, for the simple reason that this process of appearing and disappearing, integrating and disintegrating, is continuing infinitely, the basic entity, the source and nucleus of this all, must of necessity be infinite, eternal, and perfectly stable.

Moreover, the prevalence of law and order in all the natural forces, the supreme control and universal application of laws, in the birth, growth and death of all things

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round us, is another characteristic of the universe which most emphatically strikes the enquiring mind. He sees, not a chaotic and unregulated state of manifestation, but the dominant and unchangeable operation of certain fundamental laws. No doubt, man, who is the 'flower of creation' and is possessed of a highly evolved mental and physical constitution, takes liberties and commits excesses, with the powers possessed by him, and thereby brings forth disrupting and conflicting reactions in his environment, resulting in (seemingly) chaotic and abnormal conditions for some time, short or long. But even there, the fundamental laws continue to govern with all their might and intractability; and what appears, at first, chaotic, unregulated, or disruptive is only the reaction, according to fixed laws, of the actions preceding it. Every action has a particular and certain reaction, because the operation of law is supreme and unchangeable; and what may appear to one or more persons as being unruly, chaotic, or disastrous, is only a limited and circumscribed view of things. In the overall and universal scheme of things, there is nothing which is not following, and subservient to, supreme, all-embracing, and immutable laws. It thus appears forcefully to every keen observer and deep student of the universe that it is being governed by some one, some unknown indefinable entity, who is all-knowing and all-powerful, and who is operating and administering this infinitely vast organisation through unfailing, unalterable, and supreme laws. The laws that govern the universe, are not only all-embracing, and immutable, they also reveal superb *planning* and infinite *wisdom* and *far-sight*. Once the laws are recognised and accepted, one is naturally led to enquire and seek for the maker and source of those laws --the law-giver, who must be possessed of infinite knowledge and wisdom. This is the very conclusion that we were driven to in an earlier part of this study, that is to say that

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the universe is the manifestation of the basic "Eternal Life", which not only is Eternal in existence, but is also 'Knowledge' absolute, and 'Happiness' unlimited and unmixed. But more of this later.

Such is the broad picture of the universe which comes before the seeker of knowledge and truth viz., (I) Infinite and Eternal existence in time and space, (II) Infinite Diversity, change and movement, and (III) Supremacy and immutability of the operation of fundamental laws which govern the universe, and all its contents, with infinite wisdom. But, this is still not a complete picture. We have so far only observed the universe objectively. But there is the other aspect of it, the subjective, which is as vast, if not vaster and more fundamental in its implications. The universe exists for every one as he perceives it, and as he reacts to it; and no two persons, or any two creatures, have the same reaction or perception of any single object or occurrence. And, that is easily explained. Every object or occurrence has, not only an outer or objective existence, but an inner or subjective existence or counterpart, and this latter has a very important bearing on all that we know or understand of the universe. Each individual has his own sensitivity, his own understanding and predilections. The reactions of each and every one are conditioned by his habits, tastes, mental growth and emotional state. And these are myriad. It is therefore hardly correct to assess and evaluate a thing or an occurrence in mere objective terms. The very same object or event causes different, and even sometimes contradictory, reactions in the case of two persons or two creatures. Not only that; any two persons would react differently to the same thing; even in the case of one single individual, the reactions are different from time to time. Thus it is clear, that the subjective aspect of the universe

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has a vital and comprehensive significance and importance in our study and understanding of the universe.

Take a few examples to illustrate the implications and importance of the subjective aspect of things. The sea is the abode and life of fishes, while the dry land is misery and death for them. But throw a monkey or a pigeon in the sea, it means torment and death to him; bring him out on dry land, it brings back life and cheer to him. Music of the highest class is sheer agonising noise to the uninitiated, while to a music connoisseur it is engrossing and enrapturing. In a club, there is a Library, a Billiards room, a Cards room, and so on. Not all such amenities have the same value for all members, because each one of them reacts to the different amenities in his own different way. Put grass before a tiger, or a killed deer before a cow—you fail to please them and appease their hunger. Just shift the one to the other and vice versa, and see how ravenously the two fall on their shifted feeds, and obtain satisfaction. A baby to its young mother is the most loveable and precious possession, howsoever ugly, diseased, or ill-tempered others may find him. And similarly, one can go on examining and observing the transcendental operation of the subjective reactions and implications of all things, which simply overshadow and subdue their recognised objective traits. Thus we see, that it is not just enough to say that such and such thing or occurrence has certain properties, attributes, and ingredients. That is not the end of the matter. Whatever definition, or description is given objectively of the various things round about us, may be (and mostly is), correct and well established. But what it means and implies, how it subjectively affects the persons (and other living sentient creatures) who come in contact with it, is of paramount importance. The universe is filled not merely

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with objects and things, the so-called material and physical content of the universe. It has another and supremely more powerful, fundamental and basic counterpart. And that is the subjective aspect—the *Knower,* as opposed to all that is *Known.* It is all an interplay of the subject and object, the Knower and the Known. The whole universe is a stage where an infinite number of objects, the Known, are acting and reacting on other infinite number of objects; and they are all in their turn being acted and interacted upon by the subjects—the Knower. And, what is the Knower? It is that subtle and abstract power or force, that vital and ingrained capacity in living thinking creatures, which makes observation and understanding possible. It is Knowledge and Consciousness in diversified activity. It is the 'Supermind', in its widest sense, with no limitations, but operating in the manifested universe, within the limitations and confines of the numerous vehicles and instruments, through which it operates and expresses itself. The subjective variety and differences in the manifested world arise, not because of any variations and changes in the transcendental and supreme knowledge at the source, but because of the peculiarities and differences in the vehicles and instruments (the individual minds or mental equipments) which convey and disclose that Knowledge. A child conveys it differently from a learned man. It is appearing very differently through a dog or donkey, tiger or chicken, a shark fish or cow, a fly or camel, and even a man or woman, and so on. And the differences even in members of the same species are sharp and infinite. The real knower in each and every one is same and unchanged and undifferentiated. The differences are cropping up because of the vast variety of the vehicles through which the knower appears and operates. It is the individual minds that create the differences, although the infinite, all-pervading 'Mind'—the Supreme

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Eternal 'Knower' is the same in all.

It would be helpful and elucidative of the foregoing description and relationship of object and subject, the Known and the Knower, if we have recourse to a few examples. But let it not be forgotten that they are merely illustrative, and meant to help us in an understanding of this immensely subtle and abstract relationship.

Take a piece each of voil, muslin, twill and drill. They all have each their own names and forms and attributes; and are wholly (for all practical purposes) identified and known as such. And supposing for argument's sake that they had some understanding in them, even they themselves would call themselves and behave as just voil, muslin, twill or drill, forgetting and ignoring completely (except of course the "initiated" ones among them) that they all are cotton—their basic reality. Similarly, earthenware and earth; waves, tides, currents etc., and the sea-waters, and numerous similar examples. It is everywhere the same phenomenon, viz., the transitory and changeful appearance, in many forms and names, of the one basic reality, which is common, changeless and stable in all their respective diverse and changeable appearances.

Now, the crucial and important point in this phenomenon is the subjective aspect. The fact of the objective diversity of forms and names etc. is truly there, and the various entities bearing those forms and names etc. are no doubt wholly, though mistakenly, identified with such outer appearances, and acting and interacting likewise. But the cotton, the earth, or the sea-water in the above illustrations, is fully conscious of its real and original state—which is just pure cotton, earth or water respectively, and is also

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aware of its own transformation, which came into being on its appearance in the various forms, etc. While the voil, muslin, twill or drill possess and hold on to an objective existence only, the cotton in them has a two-fold aspect to its existence: the Subjective and the Objective; the Knower and the Known. The cotton, while objectively becoming voil, muslin, etc., is, all the same, subjectively cotton, the real source and base. It is all a question of looking outwards, or looking inwards—observing the appearances, and becoming identified with them (the outer personality or unreal self); or being aware of the essential innermost reality, and an abiding and conscious link and one-ness with it (the inner real self). This awareness of basic reality, and conscious identification with it, is almost invariably lost in the all-too-engrossing pursuit of, and identification with, the external appearances, in the objective aspect, whether in one's self or in others. Therefore, as a natural consequence, the subjective aspect (or inwards view) remains neglected, and only passively dormant and nebulous; while the objective aspect (or the outgoing view) becomes dominant, all-absorbing, and all-sweeping in its grip and mastery. And thus arises this eternal mystery, this amazing paradox; the outer, the fleeting, the perishing, completely overshadowing and smothering out of awareness, the inner, the changeless, the stable core and Reality, that which permeates and encompasses all that is manifested. The grain is lost in the chaff; the essential truth is not seen and not heeded in the appearances; the Reality is ignored and forgotten in the midst of unreality and superficiality. Such is the Universe, and its nature and working.

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VI. THE REAL SELF

We have discussed in the first chapter what the self, the 'I', of all human beings, as of all other living sentient beings though in a rudimentary and less defined way, stands for and is generally understood to be. And on a closer examination and analysis, we found that there is a basic error and confusion in the common, all-too-prevalent notion of one's self. It was shown that the self is something very different in its real and fundamental nature from what it is commonly supposed to be, and that it is something innermost in us, which is abiding and constant, which is of a non-"material" nature, and which is the cohesive and coalescive central force or power in us, the core and pivot of all our bodily, mental, and emotional activities and states. It is our real being, life and existence.

Further, in the 2nd Chapter, we examined and observed some common characteristics of all selves, all living sentient beings, human down to the lowest animals. We found that there was unmistakable evidence of the existence of three fundamental traits in all human beings, and in a less defined and undeveloped way in other lower animals. These fundamental traits are: Life, Knowledge and Happiness.

Thus, we observed that the real self of all—the 'I'—is

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of the nature of Spirit or a 'Live Being', as opposed to something physical or material. Moreover, it is this 'Live Being' in us which holds together, sustains and maintains in a united and collated way, all the other parts and facets of our complex personalities. It is the central and dominant figure deep inside all of us, which is the base and fulcrum of our entire being, it is our very existence. And moreover, this our 'I' is not only the basis and essence of our existence as such, its inherent and dominant features are: Life eternal, Knowledge absolute, and Happiness unmixed and unlimited. It is only due to the limitations of the diverse other components of our personality which group round and hem in our inmost self—the 'I', that the real and perfect nature of 'I' is smothered and concealed in the day-to-day experiences of 'I'. It is the body and its parts, the mind and its workings, the emotions and their stresses and strains, that impede and warp the fullest expression and realisation of the sublime nature of the 'I', which is perfect and eternal in all respects: Life (or Eternal Existence), Absolute Knowledge, and Bliss, being its fundamental and inseparable characteristics.

We have already, in the earlier chapters, broadly examined and discussed the above-noted concept and nature of 'I'. We will now proceed to further examine and elaborate these special features of our real Self. Let us first remind the reader of what was noted in connection with 'Life' and 'Universe' (Chapter IV and V). It was shown that in all things there is a two-fold aspect: the changing and perishable, and the stable and ever-existent; the changeful and perishable being the unreal, and the real being the stable and ever-existent. It was further shown in that connection that the changeful and unreal aspect consists of names and forms and their attributes, while the ever-existent and stable aspect

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is the real aspect, or the fundamental nature of all things. Now, it must immediately be admitted that our whole personality, our complex self, is as much a combination of the above-noted unreal and the real, as any other thing in the universe. It has got its aspects of the ever-changing and perishable names and forms etc., and also its inmost and subtle core and substratum, which is unchanging and ever-existent. Look at the body and its parts and functions. They are all subject to the processes of change and decay. Observe the mind, the feelings and emotions. There is constant movement and change going on in their activities and states, one yielding place to another, and being swallowed by it. But side by side with all that changeful and fleeting, and therefore unreal, aspect of our selves, there is that ever-present and unchanging core or basic aspect, which is holding all the rest together in a continuing and integrated form and manner, and that is our Real 'Self'. This is our "Self", not only because it is holding together and sustaining all the other parts and components of our complex selves, but also because of the fact, be it well-noted, that the whole of this other complex aspect, the entire structure, owes its very existence to that basic real 'Self'. They all are, because of the 'Self', through the 'Self', and in the 'Self', like waves of the ocean, rays of the sun, and pots of the clay (as per illustrations given before). And, as in the universe round us, so in the case of our complex selves, there is the outer appearance and interplay of fleeing and perishing names and forms and attributes, and there is also the basic existence of the unchanging and eternal Reality—the real Being, the 'Self'. And it would be seen, as our study continues further, that the Real Being of the Universe, and the Real Self in us, are not two separate entities. *They are one and the same.*

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Let us now examine the 'I' from another angle—the objective and subjective aspects of it. We are already familiar with the features of these two standpoints and their distinction from each other, as we have tried this method of examination in the case of 'Universe' (Chapter V). Applying the objective approach first, we find that our self (in the broadest sense) is made up of the body and its parts and functions (including the 'Karma-Indriyas') and mind in its widest sense, composed of 'Gyan-Indriyas', 'Mana', 'Buddhi', and 'Chitta', and all the sensations, thoughts and ideas, feelings and emotions, and other mental activities. This objective approach brings to view our self, as being composed of physical and mental states and activities, which are undergoing changes and variations, and are centred on the body, which itself is subject to changes and variations. Thus, the self viewed from the objective angle is seen to be a set of forms and processes and activities, which are in a state of constant change, of appearing and disappearing.

The subjective approach, however, reveals something very different. Here we notice a stable and unchanging entity at the centre of all things and activities. The change and movement, the growth and decay, is no doubt seen here too, but they are seen in the correct perspective, as belonging to the outer shell, the fleeting unreal aspect of the central core and reality underlying all else. While the body and mind, and all their functions, states and activities are seen to be ceaselessly undergoing growth and decay, movement and change, the presence of something constant, changeless, and alive is noticed at the very root and centre of our self. Moreover, this live and permanent entity is also found to be the 'Knower' and coordinator in the midst of all the other components of our personality (the body and mind etc.), which belong to the category of the 'Known', the objects

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as opposed to the subject who knows them and holds them together.

It may here be argued that our mind is the Knower in us, because it is through our mind that we gain all knowledge and understanding of the world. But this reasoning is fallacious for the simple reason that the mind, which is only the instrument and vehicle of knowledge, is confused with, and presumed to be, the 'Knower', the one who is deep inside us, and who owns and knows even the mind, as also all the rest. This one, at the root and centre of our being, is the living, all-comprehending and all-embracing Master and 'Knower'—our Real 'Self', and the mind is only one of its vehicles.

We have already discussed this question in Chapters I and V under the caption 'Self' and Mind, Knower and Known, and therefore an elaborate further discussion is hardly necessary. We would now first try to explain this functional and objective position of the mind in relation to the Real Self, the 'Knower' within, through a few illustrations.

Take the case of a huge dam or a vast reservoir of water. It is connected with big pipes and flumes, and they in their turn are linked with canals, smaller pipes, and drains. The waters from that dam are flowing out for purposes of irrigation of fields, running of electric turbines, and household uses like bathing, washing and cooking, through the vehicles named above viz: canals, drains, big and small pipes. Now, the supply and availability of water at the various ends of distribution is determined by the capacity and size of the different vehicles and modes of outlet. While a householder in his bath-room or kitchen

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can receive only a few gallons of water per hour, the fields and power-houses are getting thousands of gallons an hour. The immense quantity of water in the dam is open and available for the use of all. But, actually, there is such a big difference in the quantity being received at the different ends. And why is it so? The reason is obvious. Each of the receiving ends has its own special equipment or vehicle through which the water is supplied to it, and the equipments and vehicles are of very different capacities. Therefore the supply of water is more or less, according as the vehicle is big or small. Thus, in spite of the fact that the availability of water from the source is unlimited, each of the receiving units gets only that much water which is within the capacity of its own equipment or vehicle. Same about the knowing capacity of each individual—human or other. The mind in each case is the vehicle for the knowledge that is gained and possessed by it, and although the knowledge at the source is infinite and unlimited, actually, each one has his own limited and different share of the knowledge, depending upon the limitations and capacity of his mind.

Let us take another illustration, which would throw more light on the relationship of 'Subject' and 'Object', the 'Knower' and 'Known' in our Selves. There is a big power-house, generating millions of kilowatts of electricity. Transmission lines are carrying the electricity to numerous places, for various purposes. While there are mills and factories working with the electricity thus supplied, there are also railway trains and trams and trollies running with that electric power. And there is no end to the uses to which this electricity is being put to in households and other establishments. It is there in the kitchen running the cooking equipments, and it is there working the frigidare, the cooler and the heater. The radio and telephone, the fans and lights,

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the sewing-machine and washing and drying sets, and other innumerable instruments and gadgets are all being operated through this electricity, being produced and distributed from that central power-house. Now, two important facts are to be immediately noted. Firstly, that the electricity being generated at the power-house is one and absolutely uniform in its nature, and is available to all and sundry. Secondly, the uses to which it is put and the purposes that it serves, are really limitless in their number and variety. This same electricity is running giant locomotives and cranes, and also tiny toys and sewing machines. While the heaters and cookers are emitting heat, the coolers and frigidares and fans are producing cold, through this very electricity. The radios and telephones and radars convey all sorts of voices and sounds, and the bulbs and tubes are shedding light in numerous strengths and varieties—all through that electricity. There is no end to the number and variety of instruments and equipments that the electricity serves, and the uses and purposes that are served thereby. Somewhere it is heat, elsewhere it is cold. While there are lights from some, from other equipments there are sounds. At some places there is locomotion and speed, at others power to lift and move, according as different equipments and machinery are used and operated by the same uniform electricity. Take the electricity out of them, and their activities immediately cease. While the electricity is present in them, they are performing myriads of functions of an infinite variety.

Now, the noteworthy point, in the context of our study, is that the electricity, the power at the source and in operation, is one and the same for all, but the uses and purposes that are being served by it are numberless, depending on the equipments and vehicles to which, and through which, that power is applied. The same phenomenon occurs in the

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case of the infinite number of minds, working in an infinite number and variety of ways, although the force or power which activises them, and without which they are as good as dead, is one and the same. All the diversity in the mental field, as also in all other fields—physical, sensorial, emotional etc., is due to, and conditioned by, the infinite number and variety of the vehicles (bodies, senses, minds etc.) through which that basic transcendental power, the all-knowing and all-embracing Real Self is appearing forth and operating. This is the objective and functional position of the mind as well as the body, in relation to the subject, the 'Knower', the Real Self.

The same argument regarding the 'Knower' and 'Known', the Real Self and the unreal outer personality, leads us on to some other intrinsically important conclusions. While the 'Real Self' is the source and repository of all knowledge, all life, and all power, which is uniform in its nature, and universal in its sweep, the infinite number of objective expressions (or manifestations) of that basic and pure and transcendental 'Self' are limited in scope and capacity, but possessed of a limitless variety, in nature and content. The diversity and differences in the outer selves, the objective aspect of 'Reality', are infinitely numerous; and even amongst the same class or type of the 'Known', the outer selves, the variety is unlimited. Birds are different from beasts, and plants are different from rocks. The sun is different from the moon, and the oceans are different from the mountains. Not only that, but the diversity and differences spread over and permeate even the same class or species. One beast or bird is different from other beasts or birds, and even one dog or parrot is different from other dogs and parrots. Man is different from all others, and each individual man or woman is different from other men and women.

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While some creations (the 'Known', the outer selves) are hot and flaming (like sun or fire) others are cold (like snow). There are some who move and grow, there are others who are stagnant and rigid (like animals and plants, and metals and rocks respectively). Some have life and intelligence and feelings, while others are (seemingly) lifeless and inert. And even the degree and quality of the various characteristics is infinitely numerous. Man has more intelligence and knowledge than bird or beast; and one man has more knowledge and intelligence than another man, and so on. Same about feelings and emotions. While some are cruel and wrathful, others are merciful and kind. Some have a deceitful and cunning nature, while others are honest and straightforward. Some are philosophical, poetical, or artistic, others are mathematically, scientifically, or commercially inclined. It is hardly necessary or possible to describe the immense variety and differences existing in the infinite number of objective selves—the 'Known'. But one fundamental fact is to be noted. All the variety and differences are due to, and arise out of, the variety and differences in the vehicle or equipment which is found in each and every individual self. The vehicle or equipment may be the body or physical structure, or nervous system, or mind in its broader sense, with its intellectual activities and emotional states. All the differences lie there, and arise from there; and thus is created the infinite variety in the universe. The 'Reality', the source and real substance of all this variegated manifestation is one and uniform, changeless and eternal. It is Life (eternal existence), it is Knowledge absolute, and it is also Perfect Bliss. That is the Real Self—of ourselves and of the entire universe.

It may here be enquired as to what is the relationship between the 'subject' and 'object', the 'knower' and the

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'known' described above. The 'subject' is one, and all-powerful, and all-knowing and ever-existing; but the 'objects', it may be argued, being the vehicles through which the Knowledge and Power of the 'Subject' appears and expresses itself in all the variety in the universe, is also as necessary, and an essential part of the universe. But for this 'objective part' of the universe, the outer selves or vehicles, the universe as such, would not come into existence. It is only the combination of the subtle, abstract (the 'Knower') part of the universe with the gross, concrete (the 'Known') part of it, that makes the universe, as such, possible and real. The abstract real 'Self' would have existed in isolation "unseen and unknown"; and it is only the objective part, 'the Known', the so many vehicles and equipments as we have called them, which are spread out in infinite space and time, that really make for the universe. It may be accepted that the objective part would be lifeless and inactive, without the combination of the Knowledge, Power and the Life provided by the 'Knower', the 'Real Self'. But both the parts being vitally complementary and necessary for each other, and for the very existence of the universe, the one is as real and fundamental as the other.

The question is quite logical in its form and phraseology, but is erroneous and fallacious in substance and its premises. It is based on wrong assumptions and an incomplete understanding of the inherent nature and characteristics of the 'Knower', the subject, the 'Real Self'; and its relationship with the 'Known', the objective, outer self. It is not denied that the One, Eternal, Omniscient, and Omnipotent Being—the Real Self, expresses itself in all the infinite outer selves—the 'Known'. The universe in all its variety and content is certainly the outer expression (manifestation) of that Real Being. But, let it be clearly under-

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stood and noted that the universe (the 'Known') is not one separate or independent part of a whole, the other part being the 'Real Self'—the 'Knower', which merely gives to the former life (Existence), knowledge and activity. Let it not be assumed that the 'Knower' and 'Known'—the Real Self and the outer expressions or selves—are two separate entities, co-equal and complementary to each other in their nature. There is no such thing here as an interplay or interaction of two independent and substantive entities, both real and sovereign in their spheres. The universe is not a show, as is commonly and wrongly assumed, of the coming together, and acting and reacting on each other, of Spirit and Matter, or Energy and Matter, both being independent, real, and eternal in their nature. In the first place, as we have already seen in Chapter III on 'Matter', there is no real and basic existence of Matter as such. It ultimately resolves itself and ends up in Energy (or Spirit), and in the final analysis it is proved that Matter (so-called) is only an aspect or phase of Energy. The real core and essence of the universe is Life or Energy, and none other. So much about Matter and its nature.

Now about this infinitely spread-out universe, in all time and all space. It is truly and surely here, for everyone to see, in its infinite variety, and change and movement. There can be no denying that there are stars and galaxies, whirling about in space. Then, nearer home, there are mountains and rocks, oceans and rivers. There are trees and flowers, plants and herbs. There are fishes and insects, birds and beasts. And crowning over all, there is man, and may be angels too. Then, there are the innumerable creation and concoctions of man's skill and intelligence e.g. railway trains and motor cars, ships and aeroplanes, machines and factories, bridges and dams, buildings, roads, foods and

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drinks, and clothes and other articles of necessity and luxury, to say nothing of the latest marvels of scientific ingenuity, like electronic devices, jets and radar, inter-continental-ballistic-(guided)-missiles, and now artificial satellites and space rockets to eventually transport man to the Moon, Mars, Venus, and what not. Such is the vast spectacle that comes into view when one looks out and about. But, as we have already discussed in Chapter V on 'Universe', the whole of this conglomeration is subject to change, perishability and governance by immutable laws. Such being its nature, it lacks reality. And, further, because the universe as such, with all the flux and perishability in its parts and content, continues to exist, in coordinated and law-governed manner, obviously shows that it must be held together by, and based upon, something which is substantively real and permanent, all-knowing and all-powerful. And that brings us back to the underlying Reality, the core and substance of all things. We have discussed this subject in Chapter IV on 'Life', and here it would be enough to describe a few other aspects of the matter.

The universe as such does exist, and persists in spite of change and perishability of its parts, simply because its 'Real Self,' the 'Knower' within it, and underlying it, and permeating it, is eternal and stable. While the Universe is the 'Known', outward self, the Knower inside is the 'Real Self'. It is this 'Real Self' which manifests itself in the infinite variety, known as universe. There are no two entities but only two aspects of the same entity. It is all one and the same Being—the eternal Reality, the basic and real 'Self' of all, who externalises and activises itself, and takes on all the names and forms—the outer selves, and the universe and its play comes into being. When and where it started is beyond the ken and capacity of our minds, which are so

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thoroughly circumscribed and limited in their power and scope. As the Real Being, the Eternal Real 'Self', is infinite; so is its manifested outer self, this universe, infinite in time and space, and variety.

Let us here revert briefly to our dream experience, and we will find very much of a parallel in it to the phenomenon of the universe in relation to 'Real Self'. Whatever there is in a dream is nothing but the dreamer's mind. Whatever shapes and forms, activities and states, are existing in the dream, are each and all the transformation of the dreamer's mind and nothing else. The whole dream arises in his mind, stays and develops in the mind, and subsides and disappears in the mind. The dream and its entire content is the mind of the dreamer, and only and solely that.

The same happens when the 'Real Self', the one without a second, the eternal 'Knower', activises itself externally and assumes the numerous names and forms and attributes. Universe comes into being, as the dream comes into being. In the latter case, the dreamer's mind becomes the many selves of the dream, while in the former case the 'Real Self' *becomes* the many selves of the universe. The point to be specially noted is that there are no two things, mind and dream, or 'Real Self' (the Eternal 'Knower') and the Universe ('Known'). In both cases, they are just one and the same, the latter in each case being an aspect, or activised and assumed phase of the former. Furthermore, the dream, as also the universe, is the fleeting, perishing, and unreal aspect; while the mind (in relation to the dream) and the 'Real Self' (in relation to the universe), are the real, unchanging and basic aspect. The latter give life and existence and coherence to the former, and but for them, the former do not and cannot exist. They are the

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'Real Self' of their manifested selves.

This brings us to the point that in essence and truth, the entire panorama of 'Known' (Universe) is nothing but the 'Knower' himself, the 'Real Self' becoming and appearing as so many selves of infinite variety. Some are movable, others immovable; and some are living, others are without life (so-called), and so on and on of infinite variety and attributes. But the fact remains that they all are the 'Knower'—the 'Real Self', in its manifested aspect. The ultimate and fundamental truth is: "He alone was (and is) and became (and becomes) the many". That is to say: One Eternal and all-pervading Spirit or 'Self' is at the base and root of all things, and manifests itself in an infinite variety and multiplicity, for infinite time and over infinite space. That 'Real Self'—the universal eternal Being—alone is, was, and will be. There is no other, and none other is required as it is self-sufficient in itself. 'He' is Infinite, and transcendental, and universal. And yet, 'He' is in me and you and all the rest, and what is more, I and you and all the rest is 'He' and nothing but 'He'. 'He' is the 'Real Self' of all. Thus it clearly follows that my (and everyone's) real 'Self' being the Universal Eternal 'Self', I (and everyone) *in reality* am Eternal, and Immortal, and possessed of Absolute Knowledge and Power, and Perfect Happiness—Bliss.

Such being our essential nature and real 'Self', the question arises: why are we not actually and in our day-to-day living experience, conscious of, and in full and constant enjoyment of, that exalted and sublime state of Perfection and Bliss and Immortality. Why are we subject to all sorts of troubles and difficulties and handicaps, in the bodily and mental and emotional spheres of our practical experience

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The reason is plain and straightforward. It is due to our ignorance of our real nature; or what is worse, due to our inability or failure to live in the full knowledge and realisation of our true real Self. Instead of the knowledge of Reality, and practical living in the light of that knowledge, we forget our 'Self', and ignore our real status. We are constantly and heedlessly looking 'outwards', blindly running after and seeking by fair means or foul, the unreal forms and names and all that they stand for. We have thoroughly *identified* ourselves with the outer self—the bodies, minds, and their related contacts and associations, and, as we have noted earlier in this study, this outer self is changeable, perishable and unreal. Here lies the root and cause of all our troubles, limitations, and our 'perishableness': this identification by us with the unreal self, and forgetfulness and heedlessness of our Real Self, which is Eternal, Immortal, Perfect and Blissful. We become fascinated by, and attached to the outer show, the exterior self, and in our ignorance and infatuation, get wholly personified with the unreal, the outer, which can do nothing but bring us trouble. The trouble is of our own choice and seeking, because the other choice of, and life in, the Real Self is always and ever open to us. We can get rid of our ignorance and infatuation if we truly and assiduously enquire, and we can live or try to live in the light of the knowledge of Reality, if we set our whole mind and heart to it.

It must, however, be clearly and emphatically stated here, lest there arise a misunderstanding, that we are not enunciating or propagating a path of renunciation, or fleeing away from, the world—and all that we have called the 'external self', or the outer aspect of Reality. Nothing of the sort! The world is there, hard and true, in front of us and all round us, and is inescapable. All that is intended and

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emphasised in the foregoing pages is, that the ignorance of Reality should be dispelled, true and correct knowledge gained, and personification of ourselves with the mortal and unreal be discarded giving place to the identification with the Real and the immortal, and living one's life in the light of that Real. This path leads to freedom from bondage and misery, and the re-instatement of ourselves in our Real, Perfect, Immortal and Blissful state. The world is a big show, and we are all actors on the stage of life, with everyone having a part to play. Let the part be played well, and very well indeed. But, let the actors (ourselves) not forget that it is a part, and only a part, being played by us in a fleeting drama, and that our real nature and self is not that of the assumed part that we are playing. There is thus no fleeing away, or renouncing or even weakening in our efforts and activities in the part and duties of this drama of our lives. What is required is true knowledge of the 'Self', and a constant ever-abiding identification with it. How that is to be done and attained is a whole big subject in itself, on which so much has been said and written. But, being outside the scope of our present study, we are not pursuing and dilating on this subject here, any further than the few preliminary comments already made.

A few words more, before we close our study of the 'Self', in regard to a characteristic of the 'Self' (the Supreme Being), which we have repeatedly mentioned, but which has so far not been discussed in detail. We postulated that Eternal Existence (Life), Absolute knowledge, and Perfect and Unlimited Happiness or Bliss, are the essential and inherent characteristics of the 'Self.' Now, we have already observed that the 'Self', the universal Being, has no limits to its existence. It extends in infinite space, and it endures for infinite time. Therefore, it indisputably follows that it

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has Eternal Existence. We have also noted that, in spite of the infinite diversity, change, and movement in its manifested aspect (the outer self), which is the universe, there is a deep-seated and far-sighted coherence and rational system noticeable in every thing and every movement. Moreover, the overall governance and operation of unalterable and fundamental laws is supreme and inexorable. All this is a clear and sure evidence of the all-knowing and all-powerful characteristic of the 'Self'—the Universal Being. The third fundamental and essential characteristic of the 'Self' has been described as Perfect and Unlimited Happiness—or Bliss. This trait of the Supreme Being requires a further probe, a more detailed exposition than has hitherto been given to it.

We will first refer the reader to what was said in Chapter II—'Self' (Inner aspect), regarding the inherent nature of all sentient living beings. It was noted that, apart from two other fundamental traits in all of them, viz., (1) Life and the zest for living and continuing to live; and (2) Knowledge and the quest for knowledge, there is the third inherent trait of their nature, Happiness, and the craving for the continuation and augmentation of happiness. It was shown by argument and illustration that humans, as also all other sentient beings, desire to be happy and avoid and try to get rid of pain and unhappiness—that happiness is natural to them and wanted, while pain and sorrow and suffering is something foreign and unwanted. Now, what is pleasure and happiness, and their opposite, pain and unhappiness. There are numerous pleasures (and their opposites) being derived through eating and drinking, hearing and seeing and smelling, and touching. That is to say, our five 'Gyan- Indriyas' (sense-organs) viz., tongue, ear, eye, nose and skin (touch), carry certain sensations to our mind,

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and we experience pleasures and pains therefrom, and naturally want to have, and repeatedly experience, the pleasant sensations, and avoid getting unpleasant sensations. So, we will call the agreeable and enjoyable experiences, obtained through our sense-organs, 'Pleasures'; and their opposites 'Pains'. We next come to 'Happiness'. It may here be described as a relative continuous and long-drawn-out experience of pleasure, derived partly from outside through the sense-organs, and being in aggregate a feeling in the mind, of joy, contentment, felicity, and many other allied expressions and features of the same. While pleasures are rooted in the five senses, happiness is more complex, and may be independent and irrespective of, the incoming sensations. It is mainly in the mind and of the mind, and has a deeper significance and content. It is composed of many varied ingredients, such as sensations, motions, feelings, and ideas, etc., each of them operating individually or collectively. It is a state of the mind, of a long or short duration, depending upon various internal and external factors. Thus, we observe that pleasure and happiness are both a pleasing and agreeable and joyful state of the mind, (one being only more complex than the other). They both also have one other common feature. In both cases, the mind is pleasurably or joyfully stimulated by external, or its own internal factors, or both. For the state of pleasure or happiness to arise, the mind is dependent upon external and/or internal stimuli. Duality or plurality is the basis as well as a necessary counterpart, of our pleasure and happiness—one part being the mind, the enjoyer, and the other part being the different objects or stimuli that create the state of pleasure or happiness. Moreover, in the very nature of this mental process, depending as it does on factors other than itself and out of its own control, there is every time a possibility of the opposite of pleasure and happiness, i.e., pain and un-

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happiness, being experienced; or there being neither the one nor the other. It is thus, almost always, tainted by changefulness and impermanence, uncertainty and fear.

Such a state is by no means a perfectly happy state, nor is it unlimited or unmitigated. But, our concept of the nature of 'Real Self' is Perfect and Eternal and unlimited Happiness, or Bliss. And, as we have already noticed, such a state of Bliss is not possible in duality (or plurality). It can only exist in singleness, in its own self, from the very nature and essence of the 'Self'. This concept may appear to many as fanciful and grotesque. It might be argued that the very idea of singleness in enjoyment of pleasures and happiness is inconceivable and impossible, because, as commonly understood, enjoyment of pleasures and happiness has a necessarily dual (or multiple) basis, where there must needs be an 'enjoyer', enjoying something that is enjoyed. But, let it be noted here, that Happiness or Bliss of 'Real Self' is of an essentially different nature to the mundane commonly understood pleasures and happiness. Bliss of the 'Self' is inherent and ever-present in itself; it is eternal and transcendental; where there is no duality, there is no separate enjoyer and enjoyed, no knower and known. The 'Self' is verily Bliss itself.

Take a few illustrations just to facilitate an understanding of this highly subtle concept. Salt is saltish, not because it has obtained or derived the saltishness from some other source. It is inherent in it—it is its nature. Sun is hot, and ice is cold, not because the heat or cold respectively has come to them, and has been drawn by them, from some other thing on which they have to depend for their heat or cold. They are naturally and intrinsically hot and cold respectively. Salt and saltishness, sun and heat, ice and cold,

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just go together. They are inseparably bound together. Where one is, the other has to be and must be. The same principle applies in the case of Bliss in relation to 'Self'. Bliss and 'Self' are merely two aspects of one and the same Being. The reality and essence is one and single. The 'Self' is Bliss in its nature and essence.

Another example will throw further light on this subject. Take the case of sleep—deep, dreamless, undisturbed sleep. In that state, mental as well as bodily activity is at a standstill. There is no knower and known left, and even personal awareness has vanished for all practical purposes. That being so, there is no question of an 'enjoyer', enjoying some pleasures or happiness. There is no plurality or duality in that state. But, all the same, and inspite of the absence of duality or any mental activity, a supreme and all-embracing peace, and comfort, and felicity prevails, and enfolds us in sleep. However tired in body, worried in mind, or ruffled in nerves and emotions we might be before sleep, we awake and arise from sleep refreshed, and rejuvenated, and (more or less) restored in balance and equipoise. This is how Shakespeare describes sleep through Macbeth: "Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care, the death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, chief nourisher in life's feast".

We derive all this immense repose, revitalisation and peace in our sleep, without our mind or body even being aware of it, because the body and mind are as good as non-existent in sleep. Thus we see that even without duality (or plurality), there reigns, inside us, a supreme and immeasurable happiness, which wholly permeates and transforms us. It is nothing else but the peace, the tranquillity, the Bliss of our 'Real Self'. It is there, always in us and with

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us, running through all our three states of walking, dreaming and sleep, ever comforting, cheering, encouraging, and goading us on, in all conditions and stages of our lives. But here in sleep, it rises up unsuppressed and unhindered, by our mental or bodily activities and pre-occupations as in waking, or dream states, and completely enfolds and permeates us. This Bliss of our 'Real Self' is ceaselessly refulgent in our deep inside. It is ever in us, being an inseparable and essential trait of our being, and the moment we close up the exterior, and outgoing activities and attention, and dive into our interior (unconsciously as in sleep), or consciously as in 'Yogic Samadhi' (Spiritual Trance), this Infinite Bliss is there to be experienced and realised, in all its glory and immensity. In our sleep, we just unconsciously slip into that state of Bliss. But, as in 'Yogic Samadhi' and other spiritual experiences, there are methods and practices prescribed, by following which, one can consciously and deliberately enter into that supremely blissful state. However, that is no part of our present study, and we would leave it at that. Suffice it to say here, that 'Bliss' is one of the fundamental characteristics of our 'Real Self', as has been shown in the preceding pages. This perennial and unfathomable source and repository of perfect and unlimited happiness—'Bliss', is inseparable from our 'Real Self'—it is its very essence and nature.

Here we come to the close of our examination and elucidation of the 'Real Self' and with that to the end of this study.

We are now in a position to summarise the principal conclusions of this study, the foremost among them being the one-ness of all existence in essence and reality. Howsoever different and varying the external names and forms

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and their attributes may be, there is one Eternal Infinite Being that is at the root and base of all things, and that permeates and enfolds, and holds together through immutable laws, the entire universe with all its variegated content, in all time and all space. In the course of a deeper study of the subject, we found that matter as such, and as generally understood, is a misnomer and hardly exists, and that in the ultimate analysis, everything is basically and essentially Energy or Life. It was further observed that there are three fundamental traits that are inherent in the Infinite Being, the basic Life and Reality of all, and they are: (1) Eternal Existence, (2) Absolute Knowledge and Power, and (3) Bliss or Perfect and Unlimited Happiness.

Moreover, a close examination and analysis of our 'I', our own self, brought to light the dual aspect of our self, the outer and the inner. The outer aspect was the commonly held and erroneous conception of the self, as being the body and its parts, mind and its components, sensations, ideas, feelings and emotions etc., and all the rest that is associated with the body and mind. As opposed to that, we noted that the inner, "Spiritual", aspect of self, characterised as it is by the same three fundamental traits of Eternal Existence, Absolute Knowledge, and Bliss, which are common with those of the Infinite all-pervading Being, has the marks of Reality, and is the essential nature of self. We thus reached the conclusion that our 'Self', and the 'Real Self' (the Reality and essential nature) of the Universe, is one and the same; that the Eternal Infinite all-pervading Being is the 'I', the 'Self' of all. This further brought home the truth of the basic metaphysical thesis: "He (the Infinite Being) alone was, and became the many", and that all things, for ever and everywhere, are His Manifestations, whether they be movable or immovable, alive or not alive (as commonly

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understood). It was shown that it is the nature of the Infinite Being to appear as many, to seem to assume multiple forms and shapes and activities, which are ever-changing, ever-perishing, always subject to the law of birth, growth, decay, and death, and as such lacking in reality and stability. While that is true about His Manifestation, His outward appearance 'He' himself is Eternal and Changeless, Omnipresent and Omniscient, Omnipotent and Ever-Blissful. Such is the real face of the 'I', the Universe, and the Infinite all-pervading Being—the 'Real Self'. There is a perfect and complete unity and one-ness in essence and substance, though they bear three names.

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PART II

QUEST OF HAPPINESS

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VII. HAPPINESS

Everyone is pursuing Happiness. One may call it by different names, or understand or epitomise it in a variety of ways and forms, but the basic desire and urge in everyone is to be rid of unhappiness, pain and distress, and to find and preserve happiness, undiluted with pain or suffering or unpleasantness. It is a basic and fundamental yearning; it is our very nature to be happy and to strive to remain happy. If we look upon this matter from a broad point of view, we would find that happiness is the desideratum and objective of not only human beings, but of all sentient living creatures. The aims and ideals may be different and limited in scope in the case of lower animals, but the one outstanding and inseparable feature of the efforts and activities of all living sentient beings is the attainment of happiness, by the eradication of pains, unpleasantness, and discomforts. That is the ultimate and fundamental want and urge. It may express itself in the shape of appeasement of hunger or thirst, protection from danger to life or limb, or satisfaction of carnal desires, in the rudimentary concept of the lower animals. But common to all such propensities is the urge to be free from one or other unpleasant feeling or sensation, and thereby to regain the feeling of pleasure and satisfaction, which gives rise to happiness, and which is the basic nature and essence of all.

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Man, being possessed of a higher level of intelligence and mental powers, has a larger number of, and more complex nature of wants, the satisfaction of which gives him pleasure and in the absence of which he feels unpleasantness, pain and unhappiness. Man is a social animal, having family and other ties. He has an increasing number and variety of possessions. He has his intellectual, moral and emotional pursuits. The scope and character of his wants and activities is thus much larger and more comprehensive. Any lack of, or shortcoming in the fulfilment of his large variety of desires, causes him unpleasantness and suffering, and he is therefore constantly striving to attain the required fulfilment, which brings him pleasure and a sense of satisfaction. Not only that he wants himself, his family and kith and kids to be healthy, happy and prosperous, not only that he strives for the augmentation and preservation of his material possessions, he also has an intense desire for prestige and fame, and an urge to do better and be better than his fellowmen. And still more, he has his intellectual, moral and emotional ambitions and pursuits, which drive him on to intense and unremitting efforts and toil for attaining the self-imposed objectives. It thus becomes inevitable that his standard of happiness becomes more and more complex and far-flung, requiring for its fulfilment a highly evolved and strenuous application of his energies to achieve his ends and gain happiness. But all such effort, complexity, and difficulties, do not deter him from continuing the pursuit of his objectives, for the simple reason that he is unhappy in the absence of the achievement and fulfilment of his goals, which alone can give him happiness. So, ultimately, the real and basic factor governing all his activities and strivings, is the attainment of happiness. Happiness thus becomes synonymous with a feeling of self-satisfaction, a sense of fulfilment, completeness, and perfection; and unhappiness, on the other hand, is the feeling aris-

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ing from imperfection, incompleteness, and a lack of fulfilment. So long as one feels that he is failing in the objectives in his view, he has a constant reminder of his imperfection and incompleteness and as long as this feeling of incompleteness and failure lasts, unhappiness surrounds and engulfs him. But he does not, and can not, rest in that state, with a sense of failure and imperfection gripping him, because that state is the unhappy state, and *his very nature* revolts against such a state of imperfection and unhappiness. Happiness is his nature, his real being; and that inexorably drives him to strive for perfection, for the attainment of happiness.

Let us here consider this matter of happiness from another angle. We have observed that happiness constitutes that feeling of self-satisfaction, which follows upon the attainment or fulfilment of our desired objectives. One who has lesser wants, and hence fewer objectives to attain, will be satisfied (and thus happy) with a proportionately lesser amount of effort and number of fulfilments, than another who has a larger number and variety of wants and desires. It is thus clear that a person's happiness is exactly proportionate to the ratio of his wants in relation to the fulfilment of those wants. The more the fulfilments, the greater the happiness; and lesser the fulfilments, the greater the unhappiness. And it would be quite logical and correct to infer that the person all of whose wants and desires are completely fulfilled and satisfied, is the perfectly happy person, and vice versa. Thus the proposition reduces itself to a simple conclusion: one is happy if one is satisfied. Now, what is the nature of satisfaction? Obviously, it is something inside of us, it arises in our own mind. A satisfied state of our mind produces happiness in us; and conversely, a dissatisfied (or unsatisfied) state of the mind gives rise to unhappiness. No doubt, we depend upon and seek to gain

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satisfaction from outside objects and things. But, ultimately what gives us happiness is the feeling inside of us: self-satisfaction. If mere possession and accumulation of objects and things outside, could go to make one happy, the proprietor of a huge Department Stores should be the happiest man going. But such is hardly ever found to be a fact. And, on the contrary, it is a matter of common knowledge that many a person whose possessions are very small and meagre, is actually far more satisfied and happy as compared to others who are in possession and enjoyment of a large number of goods and things. Thus the conclusion is confirmed that happiness or its reverse (unhappiness), arises inside us and is a state of our minds. Things outside do affect the mind, but it is equally true to say that the effect of even the same things on one's mind is different in varying times and places and one's moods. A particular thing may give happiness at one time or place, or one's mood; and the very same thing may give rise to displeasure and unhappiness at another time, place or mood. Moreover, the effect of the same things on different people's minds is so different and varied that it can rarely be accurately defined. All this goes to show that happiness and unhappiness, though seemingly related to outside things, is not bound up with things outside of us. It is a state of our mind which is the direct outcome of the response of the mind (and in the mind). Note here what the eminent psychologist, Dr. Maxwell, says in his *Psycho-Cybernetics*. "All our disturbed feelings—anger, hostility, fear, anxiety, insecurity —are caused by our own responses, not by external stimuli. If we could learn to control these responses, wouldn't we, in effect, be building our own 'psychic-screen'?" The mind is in a state of constant flux, running from one object to another, sometimes getting satisfaction, at others dissatisfaction, always seeking a measure of equilibrium, wherein it

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experiences an internal peace and happiness. And then what happens? The flux and turmoil of the mind come to a stop, and for sometime, long or short, there prevails a quiet and repose, and a self-satisfied feeling which is the happy state. So long as the mind is running hither and thither, it has no equilibrium and repose, and hence no happiness. But as soon as the mind gets fixed in repose, it experiences happiness. It is thus evident that the source of happiness is not in outside objects and things, which keep the mind running from one to another of such outside objects, but that it lies deep inside the mind itself, and which is in our grasp at the very moment when the mind ceases to run and comes to rest and repose. In other words, running of the mind brings not happiness, but restlessness; while the state of repose and quiet of the mind brings happiness and peace. When the mind is quiet and stilled, there arises the peace, happiness and tranquillity which lies inside and deep below the mind. That is our true state and nature, and the constant flux and racing of the mind from one thing to another, only leads to the suppression and vitiation of the real and inherent state of happiness in us. When the mind is in a flux and running after outside objects, our sense organs are bringing in certain sensations which are pleasant or unpleasant. A pleasant sensation brings the mind to a rest for some time, and during that time when the *mind is at rest,* there appears the feeling of happiness from deep down inside of us. It is always there, but we fail to experience it because the racing, rushing mind does not allow it to appear. It is only when the mind rests and goes under, that the state of happiness is revealed. We have then realised our true state and nature—which is happiness.

To illustrate this phenomenon, take the case of deep sleep. Howsoever unhappy, pained and distressed we may

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be in our waking time when the mind is running freely, the very moment that we fall into a deep sleep, and the activity of the mind ceases and withdraws from all external objects and gets submerged deep inside of us, there comes about a transformation in us. All pain and unhappiness disappear, and a state of perfect repose, happiness and peace prevails and takes hold of us. This state of happiness is obviously separate from, and independent of, anything outside of us. It arises from inside us, and stays unbroken and unaffected as long as the mind is at rest and not running out and away. During that time, we are experiencing our inner and basic state of happiness. In other words, the outward direction and activity of the mind having ceased, the mind during deep sleep turns inwards and gets submerged in the peace and tranquillity of our true being. From this, it again becomes quite clear that happiness lies inside us and we have only to dip deep inside to find it. But, mistakenly, we keep on exercising our mind in the direction of outside things in the vain search of real happiness and peace. Outside things give us pleasures (or pains) through the medium of our senses, but they are not real or lasting.

It would be appropriate now to examine the real concept and nature of happiness which all of us are in want of, and are seeking directly or indirectly. As we have already observed, our five sense-organs, viz., eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin, convey to us five types of sensations, viz., sight, sound, smell, taste and touch respectively, which in their turn produce on our minds pleasant or unpleasant feelings and impressions, according to our natures, moods, and characters. We have also noticed that ultimately it is the mind alone which is the recipient and judge of the pleasure or its reverse, of a particular sensation. Because we find that unless the mind is receptive, no sensation can

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make any effect on us; and furthermore, the pleasantness or unpleasantness of a sensation is also dependent on the prevalent mood or desire of the receiving mind. If the mind is not attuned to a particular sense-organ, no incoming sensations through it, will be recorded in the mind, and hence no question of a pleasant or unpleasant impression will arise. And even if the mind is contacted with the sense-organ, the pleasantness or otherwise of the sensations coming through, are determined by and dependent upon the mind. This is amply borne out by the common experience that a similar sensation has different reactions on the same person at different times, and varying and uncertain reactions on different people. Thus, it becomes quite clear that sensations by themselves are ineffectual in giving pleasure or pain, and it is the mind which is the base and repository of pleasure or pain (pain is here being used as a synonym for the reverse of pleasure). It is also a dominating and essential part of the nature of our mind that it is seeking happiness, and is never at rest so long as it does not get happiness. To achieve its objective, it runs here and there in the midst of external objects, seeking the fulfilment of its inherent and basic desire of happiness. But the fulfilment of that desire and urge is only temporary and uncertain from an outside object. The real happiness lies in itself and manifests itself as soon as the mind comes to a rest and settles down in its own centre, which is the store-house of happiness. What the incoming sensations really do is to indirectly fix the mind, and stop its vacillation and flux. If the sensation happens to create a pleasant effect, the mind merges with it, and ceases for the time, its course of running about. This stoppage of its outward movement and repose in itself, brings forth the happiness inside itself.

And now, let us examine and clarify what is the real

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meaning and content of pleasures and happiness. Our sense-organs, as we have seen, are conveying sensations to our minds. Some of those sensations are liked and enjoyed by the mind, others are not. The former sensations give us a measure of happiness which may be termed pleasure and the latter cause the reverse effect. Thus, pleasures are the outcome of the impressions and sensations conveyed by our sense-organs from outside objects, and are effective and lasting only so far and so long as the mind is responsive to them and satisfied with them. As soon as the mind ceases to respond to them or be satisfied with them, the pleasureability of the said sensations comes to an end. On the other hand, happiness is a permanent and basic state of the mind, which lies rooted in its nature and essence. It manifests itself when the mind is at rest, and fixed deep inside itself.

Thus the whole cause and root of the trouble arises from our mistaken beliefs and criterions, and our confusing and identifying pleasures and happiness. Instead of finding the peace and happiness, which is deep inside us and always with us, by introverting the mind, we seek that happiness from outside, which only serves to bring forth partially and in a fleeting and uncertain manner, the happiness within. For, it is quite obvious that the incoming sensations from outside objects can at best halt the movement of the mind and bring it repose only for a limited time and extent—outside objects being themselves fleeting and uncertain. And as such, the mind goes on mistakenly running for and pursuing its quest of happiness from outside objects, never getting full satisfaction, and the real and lasting happiness that it wants. It must however be noted that by delving deep inside of us and introverting the mind, it is not meant that mental, or physical activity has to be stopped, in order to

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gain Happiness. All physical and intellectual activities must be carried on zealously and thoroughly. What is required to achieve happiness is to correctly understand the fleeting and uncertain nature of sensory pleasures, as opposed to real and lasting Happiness. From this correct understanding and discrimination arises a true sense of values. And then we are in a position to strive for and achieve Real Happiness. It is therefore of the first importance to become aware of our mistaken attitude and criterion, and approach the objective of happiness in the right manner. We have to strive for happiness, as we must, not by pursuing it in things outside, but by delving deep inside ourselves and bringing the mind to repose and rest, in contact with the unlimited and ever-existing happiness stored within ourselves.

To sum up: Happiness is our nature, it is the essence of our being, our birth-right. Though we seem to be pursuing it, and seeking it, we are really striving to assert our nature. It is self-expression on our part. It may, however, be asked: how is it that we have to strive after a thing which is our own and always within us? The answer lies in the perverse valuation and mistaken ideas about the reality and source of happiness. Instead of seeking it and finding it in *our-own-self*, we have started looking for it outside, under a deep-seated confusion and ignorance of our true and real state—which is all Happiness and Bliss. Our minds have developed a tendency, through that ignorance of the real values, to run out here and there in search of happiness, which claims all our attention and effort. We have lost contact with our real state of Bliss deep inside us and this has resulted in our prevailing dissatisfaction and distress. We can never rest satisfied till we achieve the happy state of our being; but there again, owing to wrong notions and false values, we go on seeking for happiness in

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outside things conveyed in the form of sensations through our five senses. This experience only disappoints us, and happiness is not in our grasp through the outward flow of our mind. The only solution and cure of our ills lies in the correct appreciation and knowledge of the true state of our being. This will lead us to explore and seek out Happiness inside ourselves, by the process of controlling and withdrawing the mind and bringing it back from the disappointing and maddening pursuit of delights and pleasures in outside objects which only afford to us fleeting, limited, and unreal sensory pleasures and can never satisfy the deep and dormant desire for Happiness. It is thus clear that happiness requires a correct understanding of values, and a proper approach to achieve the end.

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VIII. UNHAPPINESS

In the foregoing pages, we have discussed the question of Happiness, and have come to a three-fold conclusion:

Firstly, the desire and pursuit of happiness is universal and all-absorbing and is an essential part of our nature. Secondly, happiness, as a matter of practical experience, is not in our grasp, and is fickle and elusive at best. And thirdly, the cause of happiness eluding us, and defying our unremitting efforts and pursuit, lies in our *ignorance* of our true nature; *confusion* and mistaken beliefs and ideals; and *wrong approach* and endeavour for the realisation of our foremost and fundamental objective, viz., Happiness. Thus, it comes about that we are never happy —or completely happy. We are always hankering after happiness, seeking fulfilment here, there and everywhere, but only meeting with failures and disappointments. Real and lasting Happiness is never achieved, and so the pursuit continues unabated and with increasing intensity and absorption. Constituted as we are by our basic nature, we can not but strive ceaselessly for the achievement of the prime objective of happiness; and as that eludes us, we go on and on relentlessly pursuing and striving for it till the end of our days. It has however been noted that happiness does not lie outside us, a something which has to be acquired or

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obtained from external things or persons. It is an internal and personal experience, and arises within ourselves.

Now, we have to analyse this generally unhappy state of one and all, and find out what is the confusion and error that underlies our aims and approach, and what is the ignorance that we suffer from and which baffles our efforts to be happy. Let us first examine the common concepts of happiness. They can be broadly classified in three categories: (1) Happiness to be derived from one's own personal or physical self, and those of others—such as children, wife or husband, parents, friends, etc. (2) Happiness to be derived from material possessions—such as wealth, property and other goods. (3) Happiness to be derived from fame, power and influence over others, prestige and achievements. The first category or concept of happiness consists of our desire and objective to appear personally likeable and impressive and to possess good health and physique. This same desire develops and extends to our family and friends, kith and kin, and those others with whom we have close ties and attachment. Healthy body, a good physique and handsome appearance, is wanted by all, not only for their own selves but for all whom they love and are attached to. Even in the direst calamities and tormenting and incurable diseases, this attachment to the body and physical self persists, and so powerfully grips us that we are never reconciled to the parting from the body by death, even though the body holds out no chance or scope for pleasure, and death should be a welcome riddance from pain and suffering. And this same attitude is evinced in the case of others to whom we are attached. If we examine this point closely, it would be clear that all our care and regard and attachment are basically with our own self. When we say that we are desirous of the health and beauty and physical

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fitness of others, e.g. family and friends, etc., it is really an extension of the concept of self. By the deep attachment and close ties with those others, we have in a way expanded ourself and included them in the span of our own self. In point of fact, all our attention and regard is centred in the self—the personal physical self, and it is only by a process of diversification and assimilation that more and more people become a part of that personal self, sometimes even to the extent of utter disregard and sacrifice of the personal self. And herein lies the whole difference between man and man—one motivated by egoistic motives, and the other by altruistic motives, love and service of others. In the latter case, the self has been so enlarged and diversified that it has taken in its ambit the selves of others. Consequently the joys and sorrows and needs and sufferings of more and more persons become a part and parcel of such a person's own self and the urge and endeavour to ameliorate the sufferings and sorrows of others and better their lot, follows as a natural result of his altruistic approach to life. But more about this later in its proper context.

Under the second category of happiness are ranged the goods and possessions, wealth and property that one has, or wants and hopes to acquire. Wealth has somehow become a *sine qua non* of happiness in the world. The greater the wealth, the more the property and possessions and other physical and material and even social benefits and amenities that one is able to own and acquire; and the larger the number and variety of possessions and goods that one possesses, the higher is the estimation of his happiness in others' eyes, and in his own mind. Even though in actual experience, one may not be obtaining the real happiness and comfort that one really wants and aspires for, there exists a universal and powerful tendency to confuse and identify wealth

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and material possessions with happiness. But the possession of wealth and property generally creates so many problems and difficulties—not only at the stage of acquisition, but even for its preservation and maintenance, that, instead of giving happiness, it becomes the source of tremendous strain and unhappiness, and an endless burden of worries, troubles, strife and discontent. It is in the very nature of material objects and possessions, that the desire for their enjoyment never ceases, nor does it ever get fully satisfied. The more you have, the more and still more you want to have and strive for. This craving is always growing in volume and intensity. Moreover, it is only too true that material objects—wealth, property and possessions, have only a passing and fleeting existence. They come and go, and none is able to depend upon them for long and be assured of their permanent and continued possession and enjoyment by himself. Thus, the toil and effort for their maintenance and preservation never ends, and creates conditions far from happy. Ultimately it so comes to pass that the objects and things which were acquired and accumulated for the purpose and aim of your happiness, themselves become the sole purpose and aim in your life, and that too in spite of, and in utter disregard of, the amount and extent of trouble and unhappiness that their acquisition, possession and preservation demand from you. Instead of your being master and enjoyer of your goods and possessions, you literally become their slaves, merely toiling for them. On the other hand, that person is far more happy who keeps his desires and efforts in a balance, and gives greater importance and emphasis to a state of simplicity, self-control and contentment rather than to insatiable and unending ambitions and material aggrandisement. Says Goethe, the great philosopher: "True Happiness springs from moderation". And such a balanced stage of mind and moderation can

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be attained only when one gets rid of his ignorance and mistaken beliefs about material possessions, and correctly understands the nature of real happiness and the right and proper method of approach for its achievement.

The third category and concept of happiness consists of the pleasure and satisfaction that one derives from being superior to and doing better than others. Everyone has an inherent desire, not only to be healthy and strong, to be wealthy and prosperous, but also to be above and greater than others. There is a constant and persistent desire and effort to be a leader of others, to have power over others, to be respected and obeyed. Fame, prestige and glory seem to be ingrained in our natures, and we assert it by trying to gain ascendancy and power in whatever line that is open to us or is of interest to us. So, it becomes not merely a question of our being healthy, wealthy and prosperous, and being fully satisfied and happy in that condition. This third concept of happiness drives us on to excel others, to be better and superior to others, and to have power and domination over others. And to this end, we concentrate all our energies, efforts and resources, until we realise our ambition of leadership among men, and superiority and power over others. We thus get stuck in a vicious circle, always trying and toiling to excel and overpower others, while everyone else, in a corresponding measure, is also trying to excel and overpower us and the others. Such a race is obviously interminable and involves ceaseless labours and toil and conflict, while happiness is never in sight or even to be expected in such a state of turmoil and endless rivalry and ambition. No doubt, this urge in man to toil and labour for betterment and excellence, leads to a considerable degree of material progress all round, and brings about improvements and developments in various spheres

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But here again, there is need for a balance and a rational approach. Instead of the personal and egoistic approach, which inevitably leads to a state of unrest and strife—and unhappiness in the end, one could pursue one's ideals and ambitions in a spirit of dedication to the ideal, and the aim and objective of service and progress. It could be made co-operative rather than ruthlessly competitive; it could be altruistic rather than egoistic. With such an approach, the sting and strife will naturally disappear from one's actions, bringing out in its place comradeship, co-operation, mutual help and friendly feelings. And further, the element of egoistic and selfish interests, and the resultant strife and discord having been removed, there would prevail concord, fellow-feeling, and co-operation leading to progress and prosperity all round, and happiness at all times. But such is not the condition of things as we generally observe in the world, and so happiness is not attained.

In the preceding pages, we have examined the basic concepts of happiness that are the main driving forces of man's activities and efforts—namely (1) physical health and beauty, (2) material possessions and wealth and (3) fame, prestige and overlordship. Moreover, the above three broad concepts of happiness are not merely associated to one's own self. They apply in an intense and forcible measure to the persons with whom we have close family or friendly ties, love or attachment. The good health and beauty, wealth and prosperity, and prestige and renown, of one's dear son, brother or wife, or a beloved friend, neighbour or countryman is as precious and intensely desired by us as our own—may be sometimes even more so. As a matter of fact, we so much identify ourselves with those to whom we are attached and are in love with, that they become practically a part of our own selves. And as a natural conse-

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quence, we experience all the happiness and unhappiness from their happiness and unhappiness as if we were experiencing it in our own personal self under the given circumstances. Their happiness becomes our happiness, and their unhappiness becomes our unhappiness.

Let us now examine this matter more closely. We want, in the first place, our own happiness, because we are inherently and intensely attached to (in love with) our personal self. This very personal attachment is carried forward and outward to persons and things to which we get attached, and thus, in actual practice, such persons and things become part of our own selves, through that attachment. And the more attached we are, the greater is the intensity of our happiness or unhappiness arising from the happiness or unhappiness that is experienced by such persons. Thus we see that the experience of happiness (or unhappiness) is entirely *subjective*, and intimately allied to our *attachments*. One thing or occurrence may leave us quite cold and unaffected if it occurs in relation to a person or thing with which we have no attachment. And the very same happening, when it occurs in relation to a person or thing whom we love and are attached to, causes us strong and deep emotions leading to happiness (or unhappiness). Take for example the case of a marriage, or the birth of a son, or passing an examination, or getting a job, or a lottery prize, etc. There are millions of such happenings going on all the time around us, but out of such millions of happenings only those few give us happiness that are in relation to our own self or to persons with whom we are in love and attachment and who have thus become part of our selves. And the same holds true about the reverse cases, when unhappiness is caused. Our personal self, however, being the core and centre of our attachment, any untoward unsatisfactory or

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unwanted thing or occurrence in relation to the personal self causes us unhappiness. Thus we observe that our happiness (and unhappiness) is directly related to and co-existent with our *attachments*, and is centred in our *self*, to which we are most intimately and intensely attached. Egoism and Attachments are the centre and network respectively of our happiness (and unhappiness). But, far from creating the conditions for real and lasting happiness, and satisfying our inborn desire for happiness, we observe that unhappiness abounds in the world and happiness is the will-o'-the-wisp, which is all the time being chased and eluding our efforts. It is therefore only natural and reasonable to examine the premises with which we make our start viz., Egoism and attachments, and analyse and find out whether we have made the initial mistake of making a wrong start from erroneous premises.

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IX. UNHAPPINESS—ITS CAUSE AND CURE

The fact that everyone is pursuing and aspiring for Happiness, and is failing to achieve complete and lasting Happiness, leads us to the very root and essence of things. Why, in the first place, does everyone desire and aspire for happiness? How is it that unhappiness creates in everyone a feeling of dissatisfaction and frustration, and an urge to be rid of it and create conditions for a happy state? Why is unhappiness looked upon as something unnatural and unwelcome, and happiness accepted as the prime necessity and overpowering and fundamental objective for all one's activities and aspirations? On the other hand, why is happiness—full, lasting and all-satisfying happiness—not attainable by all in spite of the best and persistent efforts?

The answers to these questions would lie in a correct appraisal of the commonly-held notions and ideas about happiness, and the ways and means adopted for the realisation of such happiness. Granting that happiness is wanted by all, and that persistent and strenuous efforts are being made all the time for its achievement, the failure to obtain this supremely desired objective clearly shows that there is something fundamentally wrong about our concept of happiness, or the ways and means adopted for achieving it, or both. Obviously, resulting in a failure of our desire and aspi-

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ration to be happy. It is a well-established axiom that wrong premises can never lead to a right conclusion. Let us therefore examine closely what is the common and almost universal concept of happiness.

We have already, in the preceding chapter, discussed the three broad categories which form the basis of our idea of happiness, namely: (1) our personal physical well-being and those of others with whom we are attached; (2) our wealth and possessions and sources of enjoyment, and those of others with whom we are attached; and (3) our fame and prestige and over-lordship, and those of others with whom we are attached. It is, generally speaking, inside these three concepts that all ideas of happiness are confined, and as such all our activities and efforts are diverted towards the fulfilment of the above-noted objectives. Now, if we look into the overall design and basis of the above concepts of happiness, we will immediately notice two common features in each of the three. The first and foremost is the emphasis on and overpowering nature of the element of the personal self (inclusive of physical, intellectual and emotional)—the egoistic element. The second notable feature is the extension of the personal self—the Ego to those with whom we have attachments, and thus getting psychologically and emotionally identified with such others. We thus observe that the whole basis of our ideas about happiness revolves round personal attachments. Our first and foremost attachment is with our own self, and an expansion of that personal attachment brings within its orbit those others with whom we have attachments and have got identified with. Personal self and attachments are thus seen to be the mainsprings and foundation of all our endeavours to be happy, and we aspire to build the intensity desired edifice of happiness on such foundation and activities.

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Happiness, thus conceived, revolves round the Ego, and lies rooted in the satisfaction of our various wants and desires whether they be physical, intellectual or emotional. And the wants and desires, in their turn, are based upon the five sense-organs (defined earlier), coupled with our minds and emotions. Thus, in brief, we seek happiness in the pleasures and satisfactions that we derive from the five sense-organs in conjunction with their respective sense-objects. There is a pleasure coming through the tongue when tasting good delicious food or drink, a pleasure being derived through the eyes when seeing beautiful and interesting objects, or through the ears when hearing pleasing sounds and words, or through the nose when smelling nice smells, or likewise through the skin when in contact with pleasing and comfortable touch. Our individual minds and emotions do give a varied and personal touch to all such sensations and pleasures, making them less or more in different individuals, and at different times and places and moods. But the over-all and outstanding fact remains, and that is 'pleasures of the senses constitute our idea of happiness'. Wanting to be happy, we seek the sensory pleasures by providing the sense-organs with their respective sense-objects. All our endeavours to be happy thus get concentrated and confined to the procurement and enjoyment of sense-objects through the five senses.

But this concept of happiness and approach to happiness does not yield results. Our inherent desire and urge for lasting and complete happiness is not fulfilled, howsoever we pander to our senses and create all the conditions for the satisfaction of physical sensory desires. The reasons for the failure to get full and lasting happiness through the satisfaction of sensory desires, are manifold, but the principal

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among them may be enumerated as follows: (1) Transitory and fleeting nature of the sense pleasures. The pleasures coming through the senses when in contact with their objects are not of a permanent and lasting character. (2) Even when such pleasures are made to continue and prolonged and enlarged, there comes about a stage of satiety, indifference and even revulsion, when such pleasures are repeated and continued. (3) The pre-conditions and aftermath of sense pleasures are so tiresome and troublesome, so painful and enervating, that they are out of all proportion to the fleeting nature and real value of the pleasures thus derived. (4) The very existence and procurement of such pleasures is dependent on outside objects, and persons other than ourselves. As such, there can never be a certainty, a continuity and dependability on the availability of such pleasures, when and where one wants and desires them to be. (5) Sense-born pleasures never create conditions for a full and complete satisfaction, because they satisfy one's desire of happiness only temporarily and partially. The more one has of sense-pleasures, the more and intenser is the desire created for a repetition and augmentation of such pleasures, with all the evil effects of over-indulgence and harmful reactions. A vicious circle is thus created, leading from one pleasure-seeking to another, each one being only partially satisfying, while at the same time, increasing manifold the lust and craving for such pleasures. Thus it is quite obvious that seeking and aspiring for complete and lasting happiness in the context of pleasure-seeking (centred in the five senses) is foredoomed to failure and frustration. But in the absence of a correct and clear idea of real happiness, where it lies and how it is to be approached and striven for, we are constantly floundering in the never-ending and baffling pursuit of real happiness. The

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desire and pursuit of real happiness, however, will persist and must continue, because Happiness is our birth-right and it is the essence of our being.

Let us now turn to an examination of the question: why is happiness so universally sought for, and deeply cherished. If we look around, we clearly observe that man, woman or child, whoever and wherever he or she may be, is striving (consciously or unconsciously) to be happy. Every pain or unhappiness is looked upon as a foreign and unwelcome visitation, which must needs be got rid of, and the state of happiness and peace restored. Not only human beings, but all sentient living creatures are desirous of being in a happy state, by the removal of any and every disturbing and painful experience which mars their happiness. No one is ever reconciled to an unhappy state, and revolts against it, and strives to remove it. Happiness is our very nature and essence. It is always there deep inside us and it is only disturbed and suppressed through the working of our minds and sense-organs running out towards outside sense-objects and other physical, mental and emotional pursuits in the vain hope of gaining happiness. Such an outward drift and contact with sense-objects only tends to afford a temporary satisfaction, during the time that the mind gets focussed and ceases its activity and comes to rest. While thus resting, the mind merges in its primeval source and base and there experiences a touch of real happiness that lies stored and rooted within itself. It is thus clear that happiness does not lie outside one's self, but has to be looked for and obtained within oneself. And the method to be adopted to obtain it is obviously not in seeking it by running after outside stimuli, but by stabilising and steadying the mind. It is impossible to achieve real happiness as long as the mind is in a state of flux and racing from one stimulus to another. Happiness

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dawns on us immediately the mind comes to rest in a state of equipoise. The mind, while working in duality or multiplicity, only experiences turmoil and restlessness, and happiness is far from it. When, however, the mind is rested and steadied, a state of peace and equipoise is obtained, and therein lies happiness. Flux and racing of the mind brings restlessness, which is not a happy state. The steady and restful state of mind is the happy state. The conclusion is thus irresistible that one can not hope to achieve real and lasting happiness by running after pleasurable stimuli of the sense-organs, and seeking for happiness from outside. Happiness being inside us, it has to be sought out by steadying the mind, removing its restless racing from one outside object to another, and focussing it on one point—be it a physical activity or intellectual or artistic pursuit, or a spiritual exercise. The real problem is to achieve equipoise and equilibrium, and thus get rid of the ceaseless rush and racing of the mind in duality and multiplicity. Because in such a state of rush and turmoil, the mind is getting farther and farther away from its source, which, as we have noted, is the centre and repository of real happiness. On the other hand, when the mind gets rooted and steadied, whether through some physical, intellectual, or artistic activity, or spiritual or religious exercise, the mind comes to rest on that spot, a state of equilibrium is restored, the pull and push of duality of the ouside world is for the time suspended, and there arises from inside, the peace, tranquillity and happiness which was always there to have and to experience, but for the turmoil and racing of the mind hither and thither. We have thus to first understand the true nature of happiness and its source, and then to train ourselves to accomplishing the objective of achieving happiness. From what we have discussed above, it is clear that true happiness does not lie in outside things and the transient pleasures derived from

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them. It lies in the equipoise and concentration of the mind, rid of duality and fixed on one point, where it loses its restlessness and merges in its source and tastes of the inward peace and happiness. Riddance of duality and merging the mind with the source, are the panacea for removal of unhappiness and the keynotes for achieving happiness. Marcus Aurelius, the great Roman Philosopher and Emperor, has expressed this noble principle in the following words: "Nowhere, either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble, does a man retire than into his own soul. Constantly then give to thyself this retreat, and renew thyself".

Having now arrived thus far in our discussion of the problem of achieving happiness, we have next to see and analyse the usual workings of the mind. Under the force of years of habit and tradition, heredity and environs, (and if we believe in transmigration of soul, by the accumulated tendencies and habits of past lives), our minds have developed a powerful tendency to run out and about in the direction of pleasurable sense-stimuli, in search of satisfaction, and enjoyment. Sense objects when coupled with sense-organs create pleasurable sensations in the mind, howsoever transitory, feeble and lacking in true happiness they might really be, and the adverse and harmful reactions they might ultimately produce. The mere fact that such sensory pleasures through the sense-organs give a measure of enjoyment, creates a tendency in the mind to repeat, and continue to look for pleasures through the medium of the senses. As such, the mind is constantly looking for and striving to bring about conditions of the contact and interplay of the senses with their objects. The force of habit and tradition, and the general trend of almost everyone around, makes this tendency stronger and stronger every day, till it so comes

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to pass that one really gets slavishly fettered to sense-pleasures, in spite of the fact that they fail to fully satisfy, but bring about only hollow, transitory, and even deleterious and degenerating consequences. The first and foremost task therefore of a person who wants to achieve real happiness, is to turn the mind round from the pursuit of such empty and fleeting pleasures of the senses, and to divert it towards the lasting and wholesome enjoyment of real happiness, which lies within its own centre. For this purpose, the mind has to be trained to withdraw from its tumultuous outward race, and get focussed and steadied in a state of equipoise, centred in its own being. This requires a great deal of effort and practice, coupled with a proper understanding and conviction of the true nature of real happiness as opposed to the ephemeral and illusive nature of sense-born pleasures. Such a revolutionary change in the age-old habits and tendencies of the mind can, however, not be made suddenly or by a mere fiat of the will. The mind, having been so long and so deeply attached to the pleasures of the senses, can not be suddenly moved away from them. Moreover, the quest for enjoyment and pleasure is ingrained in it by nature. It is therefore imperative to replace the sense-pleasures by some pleasure (Happiness) which the mind can accept as a good substitute and better alternative. This transformation and re-orientation of the mind therefore involves a twofold process: (1) Exposing the unreality and illusiveness of the sense-pleasures, and (2) the elucidation, leading to faith and conviction, of the nature of real happiness which lies rooted and stored deep inside oneself.

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X. THE NATURE AND ESSENCE OF TRUTH

Before we further continue the examination of the problem of Happiness, let us survey the field of life and world in general and the basic reality underlying all creation. Let us be clear in our minds regarding the pattern and structure of things around us, and the forces working all round, and the world at large. Unless we get a clear idea of the powerful and universal forces that we find working in and around us, and we try to understand the trend and pattern of such forces, we simply can not devise the best ways and patterns for our individual lives, happiness, and other aims and objectives. And, while pursuing such a general study of the world at large, and the basic forces and laws governing it, we shall have to examine the question, however briefly it may be, of the origin, and ultimate direction and scheme of the world, because it is obviously impossible for an individual to plan out his life and activities in isolation, irrespective of and uninfluenced by the all-embracing and powerful forces and laws working all round. Everyone must needs adapt and adjust oneself to the shape and scheme of things, which are immanent and universal. Failure to rightly understand and suitably adapt oneself to such world forces would only lead to one's own frustration and ultimate destruction.

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Casting our eyes round and about, and viewing the panorama of the world spreading all over and beyond, we are at once struck by the life and movement permeating the whole creation. There is ceaseless activity, and a continuous process of becoming, unbecoming, and coming up again. There is a state of constant change, a cycle of ups and downs. Sands, rocks and mountains; oceans, clouds and rivers; summers and winters; days and nights; birth, age and death, and then more births and deaths; the whole universe is in an unending three-fold process of change: creation, preservation and destruction, and back again to the same cycle. But, even more forcibly, one outstanding fact stares out at us. In the midst of all this universal and continuous change, and birth and death, there is continuity of existence. From infinity to infinity, the universe exists and goes on and on. Thus, our first and foremost observation is: there is an unbroken continuity and inherent stability in the midst of all this universal and ceaseless change and flux. The 'Life' of the universe is unending and infinite. This 'Life' persists, permeates, and encompasses all and everything. Whilst all things, in their various forms and names, are undergoing changes, are constantly integrating and disintegrating, there is a force and underlying 'Life', which is keeping everything together and moving, in an infinite stream of varying forms and names. There is at the base of all things an enlivening and cementing force, which is keeping this infinitely big show going on and on, without any limitations of time or space. Thus we observe a basic *permanence* in the midst of change and transience, an essential and abiding *unity* in the midst of diversity. This 'Life' or basic power seems to be expressing and manifesting itself in the infinite variety of forms and names and attributes, unlimited by time or space, and giving them all the vitality and movement that they appear to have in themselves.

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The next fundamental and outstanding observation that we make is the overall governance of the whole universe and all its parts, by immutable laws. We see a cosmos, not a chaos; we see an overall scheme, not just accidents. We notice a system and design, the prevalence of law and order in each and every unit of creation and its diverse movements and activities. The universe is composed of the tiniest atoms, electrons and protons, and the mightiest and unimaginably big stars and galaxies. There is infinity in time and space, and infinitude in the variety and attributes of created things. And yet, this stupendous and mighty show—this universe, of which we and our 'Mother Earth' are one of the most insignificant and tiny parts—this whole known and unknown creation, is subject to all-embracing and immutable laws. From a drop of water or grain of sand up to the biggest stars, from the workings and constitution of the smallest cells and plasma to the highly evolved human system (and may be other super-human creatures with their more complex and advanced systems), there reigns an accurate, definite, and all-pervading set of laws, which researches in science and philosophy are constantly and increasingly bringing to light and trying to fathom. Law is supreme, universal and unchangeable, and all beings—be they minerals, vegetables, animals or humans (or super-humans), be they of the category of earth, water, fire, air or sky (ether)—all are subject to laws that unerringly and inexorably govern them. And law presupposes an intelligence, knowledge and insight. So, when we observe and say that law is governing everything and every activity, we immediately become conscious of and proclaim the existence of a supreme and infinitely wise law-maker and law-dispenser at the root and centre of creation. Says Albert Winchester (noted Biologist): "A deeper and firmer belief in God can be the only result of a better insight into truth".

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Thus, the two foremost observations, as discussed above, lead us to the inevitable conclusion that there is (1) Eternal 'Life' and (2) Absolute knowledge and Power, at the root and centre of all creation, and running right through and all over the entire universe. One may name it God or Creator, another may call it the Truth or Reality, or Nature; but the incontrovertible fact remains that there is a basic and mighty force underlying and immanent in the whole creation, which is both eternally alive and unifying, and all-knowing and intelligently governing through immutable and universal laws. This enormous and mighty Power holds together all the diversity and change, and manifests itself in all the names and forms and their various attributes, as exhibited in the universe. And not only that, it holds together and gives life and vitality to the whole creation; it also governs with infinite intelligence and supreme knowledge, through laws that are unchanging and all-embracing. There is no beginning, nor any end, to this basic Reality, which is the root and essence of all things. This basic Reality or Fundamental Truth is Infinite, and is all-pervading. It is Life-giving and unifying. It is all-knowing and all-powerful.

Furthermore, there is another characteristic of this living underlying Reality, the Truth, which cannot fail to impress us. In addition to being alive and infinite, all-knowing and all-powerful, this basic Reality or Truth is possessed of infinite and unmitigated Happiness; it is Blissful by nature and in essence. Let us now examine and understand this characteristic. In the preceding chapters, we have discussed the problem of Happiness, and how everyone (from man down to all sentient living creatures) is aspiring to achieve Happiness, and avert and avoid pain and unhappiness. We have also noted that real Happiness

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is not attainable in sense-pleasures, when the mind runs out and about in duality and multiplicity; and it is only when the mind gets fixed and steadied, that happiness is achieved and experienced from deep inside oneself, in a state of equipoise and restfulness. The very fact that there is a universal and all-powerful urge and desire in everyone to be happy clearly shows that happiness is the very nature and essence of all. Moreover, the fact that happiness eludes us so long as we seek it in duality and multiplicity by making the mind run from one external object to another, and the moment we get the mind rested and steadied, and merged in its own centre, we experience a peace and happiness which arises from our own inside. These two facts put together lead to the clear and unmistakable conclusion that we have inside us an infinite and an undiluted source of happiness. It is our very essence and real nature because we are instinctively and powerfully being drawn and driven towards it. Thus, we observe, and adduce from argument, that our real nature and true self is Infinite Happiness, which must naturally be one of the characteristics of the Truth or Reality underlying and pervading the whole universe. Not only is Happiness our essential nature, Infinite Life and Infinite knowledge is also our basic and fundamental nature, as we are in reality and essence, manifestations of the mighty and Infinite Power or Truth that pervades the whole universe. Our essential and basic self is one and the same as, and inseparable from, the Truth or Reality pervading the whole universe. Our real 'Self' and that of all others, and the 'Self' of the universe are same and identical. For a fuller and more detailed elucidation of this subject, the reader is referred to Part I, ante—"Real Self and the Ego."

As a result of the foregoing brief study, based on observations and logical arguments, we arrive at the following

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conclusions: (a) In the midst of changing forms and names and attributes, there is basic unity and continuity, which is unlimited in time or space. *Eternal Life* pervades the whole universe. (b) There are fundamental and immutable laws governing all the units, big or small, in the whole creation, and all their attributes and movements. *Absolute knowledge* and an intelligent system pervades and governs everything. (c) The basic nature and essence of all existence is *Perfect Happiness* or Bliss. But, as we have seen, these three characteristics belong to the basic Reality or Truth underlying the universe, as well as all creatures. As against that, we also observe in the common experience of almost everyone in the world, death and destruction, irrational behaviour and conflict, and misery and unhappiness. While we notice a universal urge and desire in every one to be alive and preserve life, to know and understand and to expand knowledge, to be happy and remain happy, there stands out the ugly and unmistakable fact that these urges and objectives of man remain unfulfilled, partially or wholly. As we are, in the present context, concerned with Happiness of man (inclusive of woman), let us try to prove this divergence between maxim and experience, the principle and the practical shape of things, and find out why this contradiction exists, and why do unhappiness, conflict and misery generally surround us, instead of Happiness and Peace and Bliss.

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XI. RIGHT UNDERSTANDING AND REALISATION OF TRUTH

In the earlier chapters, we have discussed the commonly-held concepts of happiness, where it is supposed to reside, and how its scope is extended to the growing circle of persons and things where our attachments lead us on and commit us to. We have noted that happiness is almost universally and fallaciously equated with sense-born pleasures; and the centre and core of such pleasures is one's ego (the lower self, as opposed to the real self, which is identical with the universal self—refer to chapter X), and an expanded form of the ego which includes other things and persons with whom we are attached—in other words: Me and Mine. It is thus quite plain and obvious that all search and aspiration for happiness is spread out in things and persons in the external world and centred in the ego, which is a sort of shell encasing our real inner being—the Real Self—The 'Truth'. The ego (or the outer self) may be here simply defined as the complex which we call 'I', and which consists mainly of the body including the 'Karma Indriyas' (organs of action), the sense-organs ('Gyan-Indriyas') the mind in a specific and limited sense ('Mana'), the intellect ('Buddhi') and memory (Chitta'). All one's bodily, mental and emotional activities are cen-

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tred on this 'I', the ego; and every person has a distinctive and individualised ego, comprising of his particular and individualistic body, senses, mind, intellect and memory. As opposed to this ego, each one of us is possessed of and imbued with a real self, which is deep inside one and all, and which gives life and vitality to all the parts and their functions, forming the Ego. One may call this real self 'The Spark of Life', 'The Spirit', 'Soul', 'All-pervading Energy', or 'The Truth'. The chief distinguishing feature however of the Real Self as opposed to the Ego, is that it is the base and essence of our entire being—physical, mental, emotional, etc. and that every function and activity that goes on in the ego is through its impact and presence. It not only sustains life, and gives all the vitality and mobility to the various parts of the ego, it also is the co-ordinating and cohesive force in the diverse complex that comprises the ego. The ego is nothing more than a name and form with various attributes and activities, that is ascribed to each individual, a superimposed and fleeting unit or segment of that One and indivisible whole—The Eternal Life. It is like so many individual drops, waves and currents in an ocean. All the drops, waves and currents in the ocean are parts of the ocean, have their existence in the ocean, are in fact and reality nothing else but the ocean. Their separate existence is only in an assumed form and name, which is subject to constant change and destruction; while the ocean which bears and sustains them, is ever-existent and changeless. The same analogy is applicable to the Ego in relation to the Eternal Life. While the egos are just bundles of forms and names and allied activities, are ever-changing and destructible by their very nature and composition, the Eternal Life which sustains and holds them, and from which they arise, in which they grow and exist, and wherein they

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ultimately merge and lose their separate assumed existence, is Infinite and unchanging. The Ego being nothing other than an assumed and fleeting name and form, and having its entire source and existence in the Eternal Life, is an integral part and parcel of the Infinite Eternal Life. In reality and essence, it is all one Eternal Life and the egos are just illusory, assumed and transient names and forms masquerading and dancing, appearing and disappearing in the grand and eternal drama of Life Infinite.

The *Eternal Life,* 'The Truth' pervading the whole universe is one, indivisible, and indestructible. It is without a second. It is the real Self of all. All the multiplicity and diversity that is observed in the universe is a manifestation of this Real Self—The Eternal Life. It is the nature of this Real Self to manifest itself in diverse forms and names with their related attributes, as illustrated in the example of the ocean given above. Another example will further illustrate and explain this phenomenon. During a dream, the dreamer is having all sorts of experiences, seeing innumerable persons and things and likewise hearing, tasting, smelling and touching a variety of sense objects. There is no limit to the persons and things that are present in the dream and the different parts and activities that they are performing. There exists in the dream an enormous multiplicity and ceaseless activity. Such is the dream, but look at its substance and reality. All the things and persons, and all the experiences and activities connected with them, are nothing else but the dreamer himself. The whole dream, with all its variety and movement, exists in the dreamer's mind. It arises in his mind, grows and develops in his mind, and ultimately merges in his mind and disappears. The names and forms that emerged in the dream

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had no independent substance and reality, and no permanence, except while the dream lasted. The dreamer's mind was the only reality and absolutely single and unmixed substance and foundation of the whole dream. In fact and essence, the mind of the dreamer had taken on the appearance of all the multiplicity of names and forms and had itself *become* the whole show. Similarly, the Eternal Life—the Real Self, becomes the infinite number and variety of things and persons and activities that we find in the universe. It is the inherent nature of the Eternal Life to manifest itself in a variety of forms, and names and attributes, whilst retaining its oneness. While the names and forms are constantly appearing and disappearing, changing from moment to moment, and ultimately losing their integrity and identity, the Real Self of all, the Eternal Life, remains the base and source, the life and essence of all existence from infinity to infinity.

This Eternal Life is not only our Real Self and existence, it is also possessed of *Absolute and Infinite Knowledge*. We have already, earlier in this book, briefly discussed this aspect of the Real Self—The Eternal Infinite Being, and for a fuller discussion and examination of this subject, the reader is again referred to Part I, ante—"Real Self and the Ego." It would therefore be enough to mention here a few points which lead us to the conclusion that this Infinite Eternal Life is also the repository of Absolute and Infinite Knowledge. The entire universe, in its infinite span in time and its infinite expanse in space, is governed by precise and immutable laws that rigidly apply to all and everyone of the objects of creation, and all their activities and attributes. That such laws are evidence of an infinite intelligence and an infallibility of application, at the root and

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base of the creation, is being increasingly realised and appreciated by scientists and philosophers as their researches and studies carry them further and deeper in the workings of 'This Mysterious Universe', this grand, wonderfully well-regulated show. From the tiniest to the mightiest, everything and every process is ruled by law or laws, which are not only universal and unchangeable, but infinitely intelligent. They convincingly prove the existence of an infallible and all-knowing power behind and beneath everything. Be it in the mineral world or vegetable, in the fish, birds or beasts, be it in man (or super-man), there is unmistakable evidence of a grand master mind, possessed of absolute and Infinite knowledge and power, at the source and centre of all things, attributes and activities. Call it action and reaction, attributes and properties, instinct or intelligence, knowledge or wisdom, insight or inspiration, each and all of it springs from and operates inside the grand design of this Eternal Life. And that is, believe it or not, our Real Self. It may be useful to note here some observations made by eminent scientists: "The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow-creatures as meaningless, is not only unfortunate but almost disqualified for Life" (Albert Einstein). "I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me" (Isaac Newton). "Science is growing. Yet a world that has science, needs, as never before, the inspiration that religion offers" (Arthur Compton).

We now come to another fundamental aspect of Eternal Life, viz. *Perfect Happiness or Bliss.* This subject has been briefly discussed in the earlier parts of this book and more

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fully in Part I, ante—"Real Self and the Ego", to which the reader may turn for a detailed examination and explanation. In the foregoing chapters of this book, we have discussed the ingrained and powerful urge and desire in all sentient living beings to avoid and resist pain and unhappiness, and to aspire and strive for happiness. In the case of lower animals, this urge is confined to the satisfaction of elementary mating and procreation, escaping from risk and danger and preservation of life—individually or collectively, etc. Man being possessed of a higher degree of development and evolution—physically, mentally, and emotionally, has a more complex personality and a larger number and variety of wants and desires and aspirations. His body has its wants like the lower animals, but he has his additional wants and desires connected with the body which have their roots in his finer sensitivity, social and other ties and commitments etc. He is in need of sleep and wants pleasures and amenities in common with lower animals. But his developed and progressive mind is not wholly satisfied with such rudimentary comforts and pleasures. His objectives and aspirations rise higher and higher with every achievement and fulfilment, so that his mind goes on looking for and trying to achieve greater and higher levels of knowledge, culture, power and happiness. That being the case, he cannot feel fully satisfied and happy in mere physical pleasures or elemental mental satisfactions. His intellectual and artistic pursuits, his hobbies and emotional urges goad him on to continuous and intense effort and labour to achieve his various complex and sophisticated goals. As such his happiness is more difficult to find and retain. But undeterred by the labour and toil, difficulties and disappointments, he goes on pursuing his aim of achieving satisfaction and fulfilment, because he is not happy till his aims and ambitions are satisfied and fulfilled. There is something ingrained in man that cries for

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fulfilment and without such a fulfilment there is unhappiness. It is his nature to strive for perfection, for betterment, and each step that takes him forward towards that goal is rewarded with self-satisfaction, a sense of fulfilment, leading to happiness. He discovers every hour of his life that he is far from perfect, and that much is wanted to bring about his complete fulfilment and happiness. He is thus driven to ceaseless effort and activity to secure the perfection and fulfilment that his real nature and inner urgings are crying for. Thus, man's strivings for happiness are in reality his efforts at self-expression, the attainment and realisation of inherent perfection and happiness. In his everyday life, he experiences a lack of perfection and happiness. He misses something that will give him full satisfaction and complete happiness. His very nature drives him to find that perfect happiness, because perfect and undiluted happiness is his essential nature, his birth-right. It is the universal characteristic of all sentient beings to desire and strive for happiness. In man it takes higher and subtler forms and leads to more complex objectives and ideals, as compared to the lower animals; but the yearning and urge to be perfectly happy is there in all. It is the essential nature of all.

We have already noted how this universal desire and urge for happiness is transmuted into action by man and other animals. We have discussed in the earlier chapters, how the search for happiness leads one towards the sense-pleasures, and the transient and illusory satisfactions obtained through their gratification. In man, sense-pleasures are raised to a higher level with an intellectual and artistic background. He seeks happiness in art, poetry and music, in scientific and philosophic pursuits, in physical and intellectual work, in religious and social activities, etc. But the type and measure of his pleasures.

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depends in each one on his temperament and character, and what is pleasurable to one may not be pleasurable to another, or even be definitely unpleasant to still others. From this it is clear that any or all of such objects of pleasures are not by themselves and in themselves sources of happiness. If that were the case, they would certainly and unfailingly, and in each and every individual, give rise to happiness. The very fact that each individual derives happiness in his own different way and from widely differing objects and activities, conclusively proves that happiness is something internal and subjective and not objective and external. As we have said above, everyone has his own temperament and character, and likes and dislikes, which are the outcome of his physical and mental capabilities and training, environment and heredity, etc. As such, his mind naturally reacts in a special and particular manner to external stimuli; liking some and disliking others, and thus getting pleasure from the former and the reverse from the latter (or may be in some cases, neither pleasure nor pain).

From the above, it is evident that pleasure is centred deep inside the mind and not in external objects and activities, with which they are all-too-commonly identified and confused. Delicious food or drink, a nice scent, good music, or a beautiful landscape are not pleasures by themselves. A person suffering from stomach colic or a lacerated tongue would hardly find any pleasure in eating the best of table delicacies; and same about a person suffering from bad cold and catarrh and being offered a nice scent to smell. Howsoever entrancing a music may be played, or an enchanting landscape or painting exhibited, before a person who is under the severe blow of heavy financial loss, or grieved through the death of a near and dear friend or relative, there is no possibility of any pleasure being derived

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from any such things. A person who is not interested or conversant with music, finds no pleasure in even the best musical performance and similar is the case with all the other types of so-called pleasurable objects. It is essentially and ultimately the mind which responds with pleasure and satisfaction to certain external objects and revulsion or disinterestedness to others. When the mind is satisfied and pleased with something, there is pleasure associated with that object, and vice versa. But it must be clearly noted that pleasure is in the mind and not in the external object or other stimulus. We have, once and for all to clearly and firmly understand that pleasures do not lie in external things, persons or activities. They are internal and subjective, and they are experienced only when the mind, getting satisfaction from something, gets rested. As the mind rests, the internal happiness is released and takes possession of the mind for that time.

Having arrived thus far in our analysis and understanding of pleasure and pain (the opposite of pleasure), let us now turn to investigating the back-ground and approach to so-called pleasure-seeking. Our minds are constantly and naturally running in the pursuit of happiness, and in so doing they habitually move in the direction of external objects. The contact of the mind with external objects is through the five sense-organs ('Gyan Indriyas already described), that carry sensations to the mind, which are either pleasant or unpleasant (or neither). Such objects as create a pleasant sensation in the mind are marked down as sources of pleasures, and vice versa; and thus arise and grow strong tendencies and attachments in the mind towards a repetition and resumption of the pleasant contacts, and avoidance and riddance of the unpleasant ones. This goes on and on incessantly during the life of everyone and leads to the forma-

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tion of firm habits and powerful tendencies and attachments in the mind, always attracting it towards the (supposed) objects of pleasure, and driving it away from unpleasant ones. And it is here that the confusion and error take their root, spread out and grow. Through years of repetition (and lives after lives, according to the theory of transmigration), such habits and attachments take a firm and complete hold of the mind and pull and push it continuously and relentlessly towards such (supposed) pleasurable objects and things. The force of these attachments and firm hold of age-old habits is such that it reduces discrimination and discernment to the lowest level, and inexorably drives the mind towards them. The compelling aim and objective then becomes the procurement and acquisition of the desired pleasurable objects and their connected requisites—principal among them being money and power. All thoughts and activities get wholly absorbed in the pursuit and acquisition of these (so-called) objects of pleasure and their attendant requirements, and the real and basic objective of getting pleasure and happiness is completely forgotten and ignored. Instead of pleasure (or happiness) being the guiding principle and real aim, objects and their acquisition become the ruling force and main objective of one's thoughts, desires and activities. This confusion and error creates such a morbid state of mind that even the lack of any pleasure from such objects and the mounting troubles and worries associated with their acquisition and preservation, does not deter a person from seeking and striving for them. So much so, that even if the objects begin to cause pain, discomfort or disease, the force of habit does not permit one to desist from their pursuit and craving. All thoughts of right or wrong, pleasant or unpleasant, good or bad, are submerged under the mounting wave of the lust of and obsession with the objects themselves. There is no time or inclination for

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such persons to think calmly and calculate rationally whether all their intense effort and labour and pains are yielding them the result which they really desire and were looking for. They do not, and cannot, stop to think whether their intense and incessant efforts and labours are leading them to any real pleasure or happiness, whether they are coming nearer to their goal of happiness or peace of mind. Paradoxically, the means become the ends in themselves, the basic ideas and aims are forgotten and ignored, and even sacrificed at the altar of such material objects and sensory (supposed to be pleasurable) stimuli. The fact that, in most cases, such objects and the connected labour and pains for acquiring and keeping them, are creating a heavy and increasing load of toil and suffering, is never considered, or evaluated in a balanced way. These material objects and sensory pleasures (so-called) become the masters, driving their human (and other) victims like slaves. And all the time something deep inside, something below the mind, is brimful of real happiness and peace, and only waiting for the mind to take a dip into it. It is only the outgoing tendencies and restlessness of the mind and force of habits and strong attachments that deprive the mind of the happiness close at hand, and mislead it into the fruitless and tiresome pursuit of external sensory pleasure.

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XII. 'MANA' and 'BUDDHI', AND THE MIND IN GENERAL

A BRIEF description and analysis of the mind (in broad sense) and its constituents, with a fuller account and explanation of 'Mana' and 'Buddhi' and their workings will be useful here, before we pass on to the next part of our study. For all practical purposes, mind (in broad sense) can be described as a component of four broad aspects or functions of our mental make-up. They are:—(1) Five 'Gyan-Indriyas' (sense-organs), (2) 'Mana' (thinking, feeling, imagining etc. aspect), (3) 'Buddhi' (the reflective, discriminating and decisive etc. aspect), and (4) 'Chitta' (memory). As discussed earlier, the 'Mana' (mind, in the specific and limited sense of the thinking, knowing, feeling part of our mental make-up) receives knowledge of the outside world, through the five 'Gyan-Indriyas' (sense-organs). It is the inherent characteristic of the 'Mana' to be constantly in a state of flux, a ceaseless wandering from one object to another, either externally through the sense-organs, or internally through its processes of thinking, imagining, etc. aided and guided by its other mental counter-parts, viz., 'Chitta' (memory), and 'Buddhi' (the reflecting, discriminating and decisive aspect, commonly called Intellect). Thus the totality of our minds are constituted of these four

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functions or aspects: 'Gyan-Indriyas', 'Mana', 'Buddhi' and 'Chitta', and every person has his distinct and distinguishing combination of the above-mentioned mental aspects or functions. However, every person is known, identified and individualised by the type of 'Mana' that he has. Externally, he has his body and all its parts and constituents, including the five 'Karma-Indriyas' (the organs of action) viz., hands, feet, tongue (speech organ) and the two organs of excretion. Internally, he has the five 'Gyan-Indriyas' (senses), the 'Mana', 'Chitta' and 'Buddhi'. Though 'Buddhi' is the force in one's mind (total mental make-up) which reflects, judges, discriminates, evaluates, decides and acts as a check and guide for the activities of 'Mana', it is the 'Mana' which is the most dynamic and powerful force in one's mental make-up. It works with the medium of body and 'Karma-Indriyas', takes aid and direction from 'Gyan-Indriyas' and 'Chitta', and instead of taking guidance from 'Buddhi', often enough ignores and flouts the silent and sedate advice, guidance and warnings of 'Buddhi'. Even though 'Buddhi' has a higher status and guiding position in our mental set-up, the 'Mana' is the most active and, generally speaking, the most preponderant and powerful force inside us. It very often runs its own course, heedless of the advice and warnings of 'Buddhi', and takes its chances according to its whims and fancies, habits and tendencies. Sooner or later, the voice of 'Buddhi' might prevail and be obeyed, either through unpleasant or harmful consequences, resulting from the disregard and disobedience of 'Buddhi's' advice, or real reformation taking place in the 'Mana' itself. However, the main point to be noted is that the 'Mana' is the outstanding feature and distinguishing mark of every person. Not only that. 'Mana' in every person is his distinguishing feature, which marks him out from all others; it is also the basis and medium of all

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that he does and thinks, feels, and aspires, achieves and attains. For good or bad, better or worse, the fate of every one is determined by his 'Mana', with 'Buddhi' giving a guiding and helping hand in shaping the course and direction of 'Mana'; and the 'Chitta' and 'Gyan-Indriyas' creating the field and opportunities for its activities.

Such then is the 'Mana'. It has two chief characteristics:—(a) Its constant flux and racing, except during deep sleep or when steadied and fixed in concentration and meditation; and (b) its continuous search for happiness and perfection. The reasons for this dual activity of 'Mana' are simple enough if we understand its origin and nature. It is the child of Perfection and Happiness, and is only seeking its own birth-right. It has its roots in our deep Real Self, which is Eternal Life and Health, Absolute Knowledge and Power, and Perfect Happiness and Bliss. That is our real Self, and that is the source and basic nature of our 'Mana', which is the vocal and dynamic aspect of our self. Having lost contact with its moorings in its outward rush, it has got entangled with and is being driven towards external objects and things, where the five senses are leading it to. The fascination of these objects and the lure of their fleeting pleasures, keeps it running in their direction. This unremitting pursuit of external objects creates strong tendencies and powerful attachments. But such objects and the pleasures derived from them fail to give it the full satisfaction that it seeks and desires; and so, the race and pursuit continues unabated, in the false belief and hope that one time or other its desired goal of Happiness will be achieved through such objects. The urge and craving for Happiness is but natural in it. But the error and trouble arise when it leans on the five 'Indriyas' (senses) and runs towards the objects which they bring to its view. Call it the 'Original

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Sin" or "Eternal Ignorance" ('Maya') tempting and confounding the 'Mana', this phenomenon may be simply defined as the inherent tendency and nature of 'Mana' *to look out and about.* This ingrained characteristic of the 'Mana' makes it active and mobile, and the five senses ('Gyan-Indriyas') are there ready to provide it with an outlet to the broad world outside. It thus gets into contact with the sense-objects, getting some pleasant or partially satisfying experiences. But owing to a combination of its compelling desire for happiness, the outward direction of its search and seeking, and the partial satisfactions and pleasures that delude, tempt and confuse it, the lure and attraction of the external objects and sense-pleasures continues and grows. The glamour and the attraction of sense-objects holds and draws it towards them with increasing force, and the partial and occasional satisfactions and pleasures therefrom further aggravate its thirst and lust for them, and keeps its hopes and strivings alive and strong. The more it goes in their direction, and the repeated contacts it has with them, the harder and firmer become its outward tendencies and attachments to those objects. So much so that it is overwhelmed inside and out by the pull and fascination for such external objects of sense-pleasures. It keeps on running after them by activising the body and 'Karma-Indriyas' (organs of action), and thinking, planning, and imagining about them. This mad rush and ceaseless endeavour continues and will continue; because, on the one hand, its intense desire for happiness must needs be achieved, and on the other hand, the external objects and sense-pleasures appear to provide, in its erroneous and deluded way of thinking and imagining, the only ways and means for achieving its objective of Happiness. As mentioned earlier, the root cause of its misguided activities, and strenuous outgoing pursuits in search of happiness, is the forgetfulness and ignorance of its real

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source and nature, which is all-blissful, and its getting lured by and attached to external things, persons and ideas in the vain hope of achieving its objective and goal through them.

This unending pursuit and intense activity of the 'Mana' can stop only when it achieves its desired goal—Perfect Happiness. Lack of such happiness and continued racing go together. When the 'Mana' gets some pleasures from external objects or internal thoughts and ideas, its racing and flux *come to a halt* for awhile. In that state, there is a flow of happiness from the deep inside. It is always there deep inside it, waiting to be released, but is lying suppressed and pent up on account of the strenuous outward drive, and constant flux of the 'Mana'. The outward-looking and racing 'Mana' does not permit the upsurge and free flow of the inside Happiness. All the Happiness that the 'Mana' is seeking is easy and sure to have if only it would rest its tumultuous racing, and dip in and merge with its internal and inexhaustible source of Perfect Happiness. It has only to re-discover and contact the fountain-head of Bliss inside it, which is its own real being and basic nature. The only hindrance and obstacle to the re-discovery and contact of the 'Mana' with its basic and inherent Peace and Bliss is its outward approach and attachment to external objects and pleasures. If only it could be made to realise the futility of its outward rush, and striving for Happiness in sense-objects, and shown and convinced that eternal and perfect happiness lies near at hand, rooted inside it; if, thus, it were to be guided, reformed, and made to look and move inwards towards its centre and base, the 'Mana' will be rested in peace, and attain its desired goal and the highest ambition: Perfection and Bliss. It is all due to its primordial ignorance and confusion, erroneous approach, and wrong methods that it is deflected from and

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frustrated in its seeking and striving for the achievement of its dearly-loved and cherished objective. A correct understanding and approach, and right effort and direction to its activities—both internal and external, can only solve its problems. The right place and the right path has to be shown to it, a thorough re-education and reformation has to be conducted, and conviction and faith brought home to it in the Eternal and Real values, as opposed to the fleeting and illusory objectives that have been driving and luring it in their direction ever so long. And here comes the part that 'Buddhi' (the enlightened intellect) has to play in the process of reformation and re-education of 'Mana'.

Let us first be quite clear in our minds what is understood by the term 'Buddhi'. It is not something lying separate and secluded in ourselves, a unit, or a distinct entity in its own right. 'Buddhi' is to be understood, not as a separate thing, but as only one of the processes or aspects of our mind in general. While the 'Indriyas' are the outermost, so to say, functions or aspects of our mind, the 'Buddhi' is the nearmost to our real self—the Inner Being, with the 'Mana' occupying an intermediate position. But the above description should be taken merely as figurative, because the mind is one vast entity, in which there are no compartments. These different names viz., 'Indriyas', 'Mana', 'Buddhi' and 'Chitta', are merely functional notations, signifying the different facets or aspects of our mind as a whole. As we have noted earlier in our study, the 'Indriyas' are our windows to the external world, and whatever we know or experience of the world outside comes into our mind through the 'Indriyas'. But for the five 'Indriyas', we will not, and cannot, know or have any awareness of the world. Thus they are the most external aspects of our minds, a sort of a borderline between the mental and physi-

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cal. 'Mana' comes next, with its intimate and direct contact with the 'Indriyas'. Not only that. The 'Mana' runs out, in search of knowledge and pleasure, through the 'Indriyas', they being the only media in its contacts with the world; it is also to be noted that 'Indriyas' are ineffective and dead (in a way) if the 'Mana' is not fused with and working through an 'Indriya' or 'Indriyas'. It is the contact with and activity of the 'Mana' through an 'Indriya' that brings it to life and activises it. Take the case of a person who is engrossed in some work. He fails to hear a voice calling him from the very next room, because the 'Mana' is out of touch with the ear—'Indriya'. Such instances can be multiplied, but the most striking proof of the 'Mana' giving life and vitality to 'Indriyas' comes from the experience of sleep. During sleep, the 'Mana' is dormant, it ceases its activity and thus there is no contact between it and the 'Indriyas'. So, what happens? The 'Indriyas' are paralysed. They are practically dead. No sounds or smells, touches or tastes or sights are being registered by the mind. The 'Indriyas' cease to function the moment 'Mana' gets disconnected with them. Thus we come to the conclusion that while 'Indriyas' are the outermost aspects of our minds and work only in conjunction with 'Mana', the 'Mana' is the next higher in the hierarchy of the mind nearer to the core and centre of our Being—our Real Self. (Totality of the mind should be understood as a sort of shell or covering of the central Being, or Real Self. But more about this later, in its proper context.) Further inward comes 'Buddhi' which lies still deeper inside, as a sort of witness and an intelligent interpreter of all that the 'Indriyas' bring to view and the 'Mana' registers and responds to. 'Buddhi' not only witnesses and interprets, it also assesses and evaluates the right and wrong, the good and bad, amongst the myriad sensations from 'Indriyas' and the numerous

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activities of 'Mana'. 'Chitta' is a ready-reckoner, a handy guide, at the disposal of 'Buddhi', out of which it draws its references from past experiences and stored-up knowledge, and thereby draws its conclusions and issues its directives and guidance for the 'Mana'. It would thus be observed that 'Buddhi' has a two-fold function: (1) the assessment of real or unreal, right or wrong, good or bad, and (2) guidance and direction of the 'Mana' towards the proper and right lines.

It has now to be seen how 'Buddhi' can properly and effectively perform the above twin functions. The 'Mana' as we have already noted, is extremely dynamic and restless. It is constantly and forcefully running out here and there in pursuit of pleasures and satisfactions, and is hard to control and restrain. 'Buddhi' has thus a very hard task to check, control and guide it. And before everything, 'Buddhi' has itself to possess the attributes and capacity of proper and rational guidance. This leads us to investigating and determining the essential qualities requisite in 'buddhi'. As the sage, guide and wise advisor inside us, it must be *enlightened and pure.* And, to be able to control, check and direct, it must be *vigilant, and powerful enough* to enforce its judgement and decisions.

We have postulated that 'Buddhi' has to be enlightened and pure to be able to properly carry out its functions. Let us now try to understand what that means, and how that can be achieved. It has been noted earlier that 'Buddhi' is that aspect of our mental make-up (mind) that tends to reflect, to check-up on our gains and losses, and our progress towards, or falling away and below, our desired objectives. It is that activity of our mind that analyses and discriminates, and tries to arrive at certain conclusions re-

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garding the right and proper course for our physical and mental and other activities. All this requires a good deal of understanding and knowledge, experience and discernment. It also requires a rational and balanced approach to the various problems and exigencies, because a mere fund of knowledge and experience can hardly help in formulating correct solutions and right decisions unless the 'Buddhi' is able to do so in a state of emotional balance, and calm and steady reasoning. This, therefore, makes a further demand on 'Buddhi's' leadership; it must be free, or try to be free, from the pulls, stresses and strains of emotions of various types, e.g. hate, lust, greed, fascination, prejudices, etc. Not only that. 'Buddhi' should be (or developed to be) well-versed and well-informed, possessing correct knowledge and variety of experience; it should also be able to function coolly and calmly, without being pulled and influenced by emotional upsurge and vicious tendencies. It should not be tainted by vice or carried away by emotion. Thus, we arrive at the conclusion that 'Buddhi' must be *enlightened* as well as *pure*.

We have now to see how that state of 'Buddhi' can be achieved—the state when it can be called Enlightened and Pure. 'Buddhi' is *enlightened* when it correctly knows, and properly discriminates between, the real and the unreal, the right and the wrong. 'Buddhi' is *pure* when it knows and discriminates, calmly and rationally, between the good and evil, moral and immoral; and is itself free from evil and immoral propensities and leanings, and is steadily fixed in the real and good. As we have noted in the earlier chapters, the root cause of our unhappiness lies in the outward flow of our 'Mana' in its erring pursuit of pleasures in external sense-objects, while the source and repository of infinite happiness lies deep inside itself. This error and

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and the resultant unhappiness is due entirely to the unawareness and heedlessness of 'Mana' of real values and basic truth. The 'Mana', having lost contact with Reality—its own true Blissful self—has created a false self of its own, the Ego, and in its search for the missing happiness, runs in the direction of external objects and things, and develops attachments towards them, which grow stronger and stronger every day. It would thus be seen that Ego and attachments, which the 'Mana' creates and fosters, are the bane of our lives, the source of unhappiness, and the sole obstruction to the enjoyment of our real and inherent happiness and bliss. Therefore, the principal and all-important task of 'Buddhi' is to lead the 'Mana' away from the unreal, the unhappy and the evil, towards the Real, the happy and the good. To give such a lead, it must itself know the good and the real, and the path or paths leading to it. Being reflective and analytical by its nature, and noticing the restlessness, the frustrations, and the unhappiness of 'Mana', 'Buddhi' tries to sift out the causes of this state of affairs. In the course of such an investigation, it casts its eyes round and about, and observes various persons and things, and a variety of their experiences and responses. It finds some better and others worse, some happier and others unhappier, and it tries to analyse and find out why some are better and happier than others, and such conclusions as it draws are the first steps towards its Enlightenment. As a further step towards its education and enlightenment, 'Buddhi' tries to understand and assimilate the fundamental truths and guiding principles as enunciated in sacred religious books, and other moral and ethical writings and precepts. It goes ahead in its search for Truth, and not only reads and ponders over such books and writings, it seeks the association of, and personal guidance from, the good and virtuous men and women, saints and sages, and observes and tries to emulate

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their way of life and conduct. At the same time, it directs its attention in the other direction as well, and observes the activities, ways of life and thinking of the uncultured and immoral, the evil-doer and depraved, and the consequences and ultimate results following upon such activities and ways of life.

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XIII. VICE AND VIRTUE AND BUDDHI'S ROLE

In the preceding chapter, we have discussed how 'Buddhi' observes things and persons in the world and reflects over its observations and experiences. It also studies and learns from books and sayings of virtuous and morally exalted persons and the association and company of saints and sages and enlightened men and women. From such observation, and reflection, study and good company and associations, Buddhi is refined and enlightened, and draws some lessons regarding the fundamentals of life and the world, and the ultimate destiny of man. Looking thus, in a rational and dispassionate way, 'Buddhi' notices a unity and continuity of life, and governance of law and order. It dawns upon the 'Buddhi' that one and all are equally part and parcel of a whole, and that everything that takes place is subject to certain rules and principles. It sometimes does appear in individual cases or larger groups, that things are happening in a chaotic or unprincipled manner. But, ultimately and in a long view of things and events, the supremacy and inevitability of the laws and fundamental principles that govern the world, is borne out unfailingly. 'Evil begetteth evil', may on occasions or for some time, look like being falsified. But it has been time and again demonstrated, and well-established as a historical fact, that

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evil does not, and cannot bring good or do good to the world, or to the person who perpetrates it. One time or another, sooner or later, the retributory processes of inherent nature and universal order bring about the conditions and circumstances which undo the evil and re-establish the good. Killing or stealing, or other forms of immoral or vicious deeds may seem to succeed and thrive for sometime, but the conscience (ingrained and basic morality) of the individual, the society and the world at large, rises up against it, and the evil and evil-doer are destroyed and punished. On the other hand, virtue and morality give life and purpose to the individual, the society and the world. Universal love, service and self-sacrifice, truth and chastity and other virtues in the individual are the main-stay and life-force of any civilised and progressive society. And, this is amply borne out in the teachings and writings of saints and sages, and exemplified in their lives and deeds. Nobility of character and virtuous deeds draw forth esteem and emulation by men and society; while vice and sin are condemned and abhorred. It is not only imperative for the well-being, progress, and happiness of the individual, but of society at large, that virtue and morality, truth and justice, prevail and triumph. The evil that men do reacts adversely on themselves, and results sooner or later in their degradation both materially and morally. It does not, and cannot give them real and lasting benefits and advancement even in worldly and material terms, to say nothing of the creeping, carping, accusing voice of their conscience which bitterly rises up inside themselves, and makes them ashamed and unhappy. In addition to all that, is the clamour and condemnation of society, which demands moral standards and decent behaviour from its members. Thus, a sinful man not only attracts ignominy and condemnation from

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society, the chastisement from his own guilty conscience; he also, ultimately and in the long run, fails to achieve the gains for which he strives in his vicious ways. For, it is a well-established fact that good cannot come out of evil, and bad means do not lead to good results and lasting benefits. And, over and above all, the man of sin and evil is not, and cannot be a happy man, in the real sense of the word. On the other side, the man of virtue and nobility of character is honoured and admired. His life and conduct is a beacon-light, guiding the behaviour and illuminating the lives of his fellow-men. He does good, lives for the good, and sheds good influences all around, which lead to the uplift and betterment of the individual and society at large. He makes the lives of others better and happier, and is happy and at peace with himself and others. Not that he has not his travails and sufferings; not that he has not his struggles and frustrations in the self-imposed noble tasks and righteous causes. He does undergo trials and sufferings, but the very nature of his sufferings is entirely different from those of a sinful and immoral person. His dedication to truth and justice, the advancement and happiness of his fellow-beings, and his disregard for personal gains and selfish interests, brings him an inner peace and beatitude that amply sustains him. The good that he does is its own reward, and brings him true happiness, which is lasting and untainted. Thus observes, studies, and reflects the enlightened and pure 'Buddhi', and comes to the convincing conclusion that virtue is the way to happiness, while sin leads to misery.

It must, however, be noted here that in the foregoing discussion of sin and virtue, we have described and analysed the extreme cases of each. In the everyday lives of the

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generality of men and women, we would find an intermixture of sin and virtue, good and bad, with varying strengths and preponderance of either. In as much as the good and the virtuous traits are in ascendance in one, as compared to another in whom the evil and sinful are more pronounced and active, the basic difference between the two is manifest. Each one, in his own way is either moving higher in the direction of a better and virtuous way of life, or towards a lower level of immorality and sin. There is a constant struggle inside the mind of everyone between the forces of good and evil. On the one hand, there are the lurings and temptations, pulling the 'Mana' in the direction of sin or easy virtue; and on the other hand, there are the exhortations and warnings of 'Buddhi' advising against wrong steps and evil deeds and pointing towards the path of virtue and goals of truth and righteousness. How far does a person progress in the right direction, or fall into evil ways, is determined by the quality, refinement and strength of his 'Buddhi' and the control it is able to exercise over a wayward 'Mana'. But there can be no doubt about the fact that a struggle for supremacy between good and evil exists in the minds of all. On some occasions, like the heat of anger or intensity of other emotions, one might act on the spur of the moment, without there being a moment of thought or a chance of 'mental struggle'. Such an act, however, does not disprove the immanence of 'mental struggle' between right and wrong, because even in such exceptional instances of heedless action, the mental struggle returns with renewed vigour, and takes possession of the mind soon thereafter. It might lead the mind either to regret, repentance, and reformation, or to an intensification and hardening of the sinful propensities and vicious activities. But, as pointed out earlier, the ignominy of public censure, the sanctions pro-

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vided in the social order, and the retributory forces latent in the order of nature, act as a monitor and check, and bring about ultimately a reformation in the individual's character and conduct, and a transformation from evil to good. Needless to say, this is a difficult and tortuous process and passes through ups and downs and trials and ordeals. It may take a longer time and arduous stages in one and be quick and short in another. But, if the individual is to save himself from destruction and doom, if he is to secure himself against physical, mental and spiritual degradation, and ruination, he has to shake himself away from evil, and adopt the ways of virtue and goodness. Such a reformation must certainly come, may be early or late, because the very survival, progress and happiness of a person depends upon his transformation from evil to good. Eternal Life, Absolute Knowledge and Perfect Happiness is his essential nature, his true self and Being; and if he has turned away from it and forgotten it in ignorance and illusion, he has to get back to it, and realise it for his salvation, and deliverance from misery and sorrow. This is the task of the 'Buddhi'—a pure and enlightened, and a powerful and vigilant 'Buddhi'.

Here it would be appropriate to consider the question of vice and virtue from another angle of vision. It must be immediately conceded that, like other common concepts, vice and virtue, *as generally understood,* are also relative terms, capable of different interpretations and connotations in varying conditions and circumstances. What may be considered a virtue in one set of circumstances, may be looked upon as a vice in a totally different condition of things, and vice versa. At one place or one time, a certain action or behaviour may be wrong for a person, while at another

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time or place, the same sort of behaviour may be considered to be right and proper for that person or other persons. Charity and kindliness are virtues, but criminals have to be meted out due punishments. Love and universal brotherhood are commendable, as virtues of the highest order. But an enemy or a robber committing aggression and depredation on your home and motherland, has got to be resisted and driven out, as a moral duty. And other such instances and circumstances can be multiplied to show that there is a relative value and implication of various events and conditions that confront a person from time to time and place to place; and as such, 'Buddhi' has to exercise a discernment and enlightened balance between right and wrong, good and bad, under an overall sense of values and ultimate universal good. It may be erroneously argued, on the basis of such relative values of vice and virtue, that there is no such thing as a vice or virtue, and a person's self-interest has to determine the course of his or her action. But such an assumption is manifestly and indubitably absurd and indefensible. Every person, and all one's actions, are governed by and subject to certain fundamental principles and universal ideals, which must be, and have to be, the guiding factors in a civilised society. The promotion of personal gain and individual benefits has to be related to and governed by considerations of the highest good of the greatest number. Mere selfish interests and self-aggrandisement have to be subordinated and suppressed in the larger interests of the community, the country and the world at large. In the day-to-day life of each individual, engaged in worldly activities, certain standards and well-established norms have to be observed and maintained, and the course of action adjudged and decided in the light of such norms and standards. There are, no doubt, cases and conditions when, in a progressive society, antiquated ideas and out-moded customs have to

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be modified or changed. But even there, the overall guiding factor is, and must be the greatest good of the society in general and the world at large, and not the personal interest of one or two individuals. Life of man in the world, engaged in activities of various types and responsibilities, is a severely trying and exacting process. There is a continuous struggle between the personal and selfish interests on one side, and the universal and altruistic considerations and ideals on the other. Critical and far-reaching decisions have to be taken from time to time, and 'Buddhi' is on test every time. The greater the emphasis on, and guidance by, considerations of general and universal good, progress, and happiness, and the subordination of selfish interests and egoistic motives in deference to the former considerations, the more enlightened and highly evolved is the 'Buddhi'. Heightened egoism and selfishness as against dedication to others' good, service and self-sacrifice, are the distinguishing and characteristic features of men of vices and low morality, as opposed to men of virtue and high morality respectively. There lies the whole and essential difference between men; the bad and the good, the ignoble and the noble.

Egoism and unbridled self-seeking are the root cause of most of the vices and immoral behaviour of man, and as such 'Buddhi' has to exercise all possible vigilance and control over the wayward and immoral propensities of 'Mana', and direct, stimulate and strengthen the altruistic tendencies of universal love, brotherhood and service. The inference is thus clear and incontrovertible: the person in whom selfishness and egoism are being eradicated, and are giving place to altruism and universal love is progressing on the path of virtue and highest morality, and ultimate salvation and deliverance from sin and sorrow. And, the opposite is true of the person who is following the path of self-

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seeking, personal gain and aggrandisement, in disregard of the interests and well-being of others. We thus arrive at the same conclusion with regard to virtue and vice, as we have adduced, earlier in this study, in relation to happiness and unhappiness. The root of all evil, as that of unhappiness, lies in egoism and the attachments following therefrom. Where unrestrained ego is the ruling force, with its attendant traits and features, such as attachments and hate, greed and jealousy, cheating and lying, conceit and cruelty, and a host of other vices and passions, there is bound to ensue moral and spiritual degradation, and social ignominy, leading to unhappiness and misery. Egoism, vice, and unhappiness—they all go together; whereas altruism, virtue, and peace and happiness grow and thrive together. Where egoistic impulses and base passions are subordinated to higher considerations of general and ethical norms, where duties are performed and responsibilities undertaken in the spirit of moral dedication and humble service, without attachments to persons and things, there lie and develop virtues, happiness reigns, and spiritual salvation is attained. And be it noted that egoism and attachments and passions are not only a hindrance in the path of moral and spiritual development, they are also a seriously damaging obstacle and a crippling handicap in the way even of material betterment, worldly success, peace of mind, and harmony among men and men, men and society. Those, in whom egoism is suppressed and eradicated, who have developed an altruistic approach and way of life, for them there are no terrors and nightmares, there are no regrets and no social censors. They are at peace with others and have peace in themselves. Whether it be the attainment of peace and happiness, whether it be the eradication of vices and promotion of virtues, the role of 'Buddhi' is clear and well-defined. And, that is to train and lead the 'Mana' (the dynamic element and distin-

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guishing feature of every person) on the path of altruism, shedding away egoism, attachments and passions.

Now we come to the next question: how is 'Buddhi' to exercise this function? How is the 'Mana' to be controlled, trained and canalised into the paths of virtue and altruism, and diverted from the habitual ruts of egoism and self-aggrandisement, attachments and fleeting sensual pleasures? 'Buddhi', which has itself been enlightened and purified (as described earlier) can do so by a constant vigilance and persistent effort. The task is far from easy. 'Mana' has developed strong and deeply ingrained tendencies in the direction of sensual pleasures, through its natural instinct of finding happiness. Moreover, it is extremely dynamic and intensely restless. Ceaseless activity (except during sleep, faint, concentration and trance) and swift fluctuations are its very nature. It is not simple and easily possible in the early stages of its reformation and reorientation to put an effective and complete check on its movement and flow in its usual ways. 'Buddhi' has therefore first to slowly and gradually restrain its movements and divert them to the desired objectives. It can do so by sweet reasoning and persuasion. It has to be shown the wrong line of its pursuits, and the harm being caused to its own interests and the objective of the achievement of happiness. The other side of the picture is to be presented to it with all its possibilities of greater and surer happiness. By citing examples from the lives and conduct of saints and sages on the one hand, and those drawn from the lives of sinners and criminals on the other, 'Buddhi' can dissuade the 'Mana' from going down the way of sin and vice, with all its consequences of suffering, and moral and material degradation, and divert its course in the direction of noble ideals and virtuous deeds, as high-lighted in the lives of sages and

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saints, leading to peace and progress all round. 'Buddhi' can also draw on the experiences of 'Mana' itself, and prove by reason and argument the futility and the perversity of its ways, and the harm and evil resulting from its egoistic behaviour, attachments and passions. 'Buddhi' can thus gradually reform and redirect the 'Mana' into adopting the ways of altruism, universal love and brotherhood, by convincing it that they are the only true and sure ways of achieving its own very objectives of happiness and perfection in the real sense. Thus, by a persistent and constant process of persuasion and deprecation, inducements and threats, the 'Buddhi' can train and guide the 'Mana', turn it away from wrong and harmful pursuits and activities, and set its course in the direction of right ideals, and correct and fruitful activity and endeavour. Gradually, a stage will surely be reached when the hold of attachments and the grip of the ego will be loosened and ultimately disappear, leaving behind a chastened and enlightened 'Mana', re-established and stabilised in its 'Real Self' which is identical with the 'Self' of all—the Eternal and Universal, the All-Knowing, and the Perfectly Blissful Being.

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XIV. 'SELF'-REALISATION—THE GOAL OF HUMAN LIFE AND PATHS LEADING TO IT

From what has been discussed in the earlier parts of this study it is clear that all our unhappiness, and moral and spiritual troubles and crises, and most, if not all, of our material and worldly difficulties as well, arise on account of our heightened and blinded egoism, leading to attachments and passions, attractions and repulsions, likes and dislikes, and the host of other pairs of 'opposites'. And the basic cause of egoism is our ignorance of our Real Self and true nature—which is the one Universal self of all, the 'Infinite Being' pervading and encompassing the whole universe and all the creation, big or small, moveable or immoveable, in all space and at all times, past, present and future. That is the 'Reality' or 'Truth'—and that is our 'Real Self'. It is our ignorance, or call it primordial forgetfulness of that basic Reality that has led us to identify ourselves with the unreal and assumed self—the ego (which has already been defined as consisting of body and 'Indriyas', 'Mana', 'Buddhi' and 'Chitta'). Therefore the only cure of all our ills and travails is the removal of this ignorance of our true self. 'Self'-realisation is the infallible remedy, and the only cure, which removes this ignorance, and reveals the essential nature of our being. 'Self'-realisation

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breaks the bonds of egoism and attachments, releases man from the chains of 'opposites', and leads him to eternal and undiluted happiness and bliss. Instead of being confined by ignorance, within the ego, in all his thoughts, actions and aspirations, the man who attains 'Self'-realisation sees himself in all, and all in himself. The confines of the ego are demolished, and the notions of me and mine, and thee and thine give place to a universality of outlook, altruism, love and fraternity. The consuming rage of passions, and the tormenting buffets of 'opposites', do not assail him, as he is unshakeably and thoroughly poised in the unity and universality of all creation. For the 'Self'-realised man, there is no other. All creatures, in their infinite variety of names and forms and attributes, are seen as his own manifestations, his own 'Self'. He becomes one with the whole universe; and all separateness, distinctions and variety are viewed in their proper perspective, as being the infinite aspects of the One Infinite Universal Being—which he himself really is. In such an enlightened and spiritually perfected state, there is no room for attachment or revulsion, hate, greed or jealousy, lust or pride, because the very root of all such feelings and emotions, which is the Ego—the conception of a separate personal self—has been completely wiped out and eliminated. For such a spiritually evolved and illumined person, the whole creation appears like a huge big show, an infinitely variegated and interesting play, in which innumerable egos (including his so-called personal ego) and an infinite variety of creatures, from the infinitesimally small to the unimaginably large, are all turning out their parts, in their own peculiar and specific ways. In all this separateness, he sees oneness, and in all the diversity, a unity. In such a state of perfection, there is an unbroken consciousness of harmony, and feeling of equipoise—it is

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unmitigated and undiluted happiness. It is Bliss.

The destiny and function of man is the attainment of this perfected state: 'Self-Realisation'. This is the highest stage of human evolution, the direct, conscious and unequivocal merging and identification of the lower personal self (ego) into the universal and cosmic 'self'—which is the Real Self. Here all doubts, misgivings and fears disappear, and fearlessness reigns; all illusions of high and low, good and bad, mine and thine, are dissipated, yielding place to eternal equanimity and peace. Self-Realisation brings man back to the infinite and perfect glory and power, knowledge and bliss, that truly belong to him, but which he had lost through ignorance, and illusory identification with the body and mind. Death and destruction, loss and suffering, have no terrors for him, as he has realised his own real self, which is eternal and immortal, and is not confined to the body or mind. This direct and firm realisation of his true being has released him from births and deaths, griefs and sufferings, and restored him to his real state, which is Eternal Life, Perfect Knowledge and Power, and Infinite Bliss. He has risen to the highest spiritual status, his God-hood is regained and restored.

Let us try to understand this by way of an illustration. Take the case of a man in a dream state. There are innumerable persons and things in his dream, he himself being identified with one of the persons in that dream. There, he, of the dream, has his separate interests and relationships, as opposed to those of others in the dream; his own wealth and possessions; his ambitions, successes and failures; his relations and friends, rivals and enemies. He thus lives in an illusory world of his own creation, hating some and

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loving others, liking this and disliking that, pleased with some thing and displeased with others, always in a state of mental, physical and emotional flux and turmoil. Sometimes he is happy and satisfied, at others he is unhappy and frustrated. He faces losses and gains, births, disease and deaths; and so the dream experiences continue, yielding no permanent rest or happiness. Such a state of affairs continues, and shall continue, so long as the dream lasts, with all its illusory separate identities and their individual and conflicting interests. Now, awaken the dreamer, and in one moment the whole edifice falls down and disappears, the whole illusory make-believe world of the dream fades away, with all its ups and downs, attachments and conflicts, me and mine and thee and thine. Then, there only remains the one solitary dreamer in whose mind alone the entire world of the dream was created and maintained, and ultimately disappeared. Looking back, the dreamer now realises that there was no 'other' in that dream world and that it was only he himself who had mentally *become* all the number and variety of things and persons, and their related actions and attributes. All the men and women (including his own dream identity), all the birds and beasts etc., all the lands and waters, houses and trees, and all the rest in its entirety was just a figment of his own single mind. Whatever appeared to be happening in the dream, in all the space and at all the times, was wholly and solely created and sustained in his own unaided mind. He thus realises, on awakening, that there was complete one-ness permeating and encompassing the dream-world, and all the variety and diversity of names and forms, activities and attributes, was basically and essentially one and remained one from the beginning to the end. And, with this realisation, there comes to him a glorious and complete liberation from the

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sorrows and sufferings, the ups and downs, that he, in his illusory dream personality, had been suffering in the state of the dream. With the removal of the dream-illusion and ignorance, and direct knowledge of his real nature and self, he regains his basic and natural equipoise and peace, and is unaffected and undisturbed by the experiences of the dream.

Allegorically, the life and experiences of the unenlightened man in the world are much the same as that of the man in a dream world. Both suffer from the malady of ignorance of their real nature, and are bound up with and subject to, the illusory experiences of their respective worlds. As a first consequence of their ignorance, separate cells are formed by either of them, centred on the (so-called) personal self—the ego, and all their actions, thoughts and feelings revolve round and inside those cells. The first fruit of this primal ignorance is the mistaken consciousness of separateness and distinctness from others that exist. And as a necessary corollary there follows the feeling of separate (so-called) personal interests, and an urge to protect and promote such personal interests. This leads on to the myriads of troubles, conflicts, and suffering and all the hosts of 'opposites'. In the midst of this atmosphere of duality and plurality, the stresses and strains of rival interests and conflicting activities go on multiplying, and peace and stability are never in sight. There is a constant and relentless struggle for self-preservation and self-aggrandisement, and strife and turmoil is the order of the day. The very nature of this illusory state of existence being diversity of names and forms and a ceaseless change and flux, there is no room or chance for a stable and secure happiness or peace, nor even of the surety of life of the (so-called) self.

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On awakening from the dream, however, the dreamer automatically realises that all the variety and conflict, change and perishability that was experienced in the dream was but an illusion, a passing superimposition on his real self. He becomes aware of the fact that all that there was in the dream was nothing other than himself, and that he had himself created in his mind all the names and forms and activities that composed the dream. In the same way, the spiritually enlightened person, who has removed the veil of ignorance and realised his true and real self, becomes aware of the basic and abiding unity of all creation, and sees all the variety and diversity in the universe as a manifestation of the eternal Life or Being, which is his own Real Self, and the self of all. 'Self'-realisation brings him the direct knowledge and unshakeable conviction that it is the one Infinite and Eternal Being that is permeating and encompassing the whole universe, in all time and space; and that everything is only a passing manifestation of that supreme reality—the Infinite Being. The veils of ignorance being removed, and the realisation of this truth having directly and firmly dawned on him, such an enlightened and self-realised person views the world and all the creatures from a completely changed and revolutionised standpoint. His entire life, all his thoughts, feelings and activities, become attuned to the knowledge of basic unity, and the common source of all creatures, and the abiding harmony and indissoluble link prevailing in the midst of outward diversity, conflict and opposition. Not that the world at large, with all its massive variety and change, ceases to exist for him. It remains there, and very much more in evidence. But, his entire perspective and approach is modified radically. He sees things in a new light, and behaves and deals with all from a higher standard of universality of outlook, and essential and abiding unity amongst all. His approach becomes

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altruistic in place of the egoistic. He becomes one with all; and separateness, rivalries and conflicts come to an end. The 'Father-hood of God' (the one underlying 'Life'), and the 'Brother-hood of all creatures' (all manifestations of that 'Life') is, for him, regained and re-established in thought, word and deed. And this unerringly leads on to universal love, fellow-feeling, service and sacrifice. Hate, jealousy, selfishness and greed, and all the baser passions get completely eradicated. He rises above the tormenting stresses and strains of 'opposites', and is steadily fixed in transcendental peace, harmony and Bliss. The world-dream does go on, and continues till the end of his bodily existence (death). But, the 'Self'-realised man, instead of being a victim and plaything of the world-forces, becomes a spectator and unattached player with the world-forces, always firmly established in the awareness of his real 'Self'—the Infinite and Eternal, the All-Knowing and Perfect, the Blissful universal Being—the 'Self' of all.

The attainment of this state of awareness, the firm and direct realisation of 'Real Self', the ideal and acme of human existence, is beset with enormous difficulties and impediments. Through his primal illusion, and ignorance of his real nature, man has created a false sense of ego, which has developed in him strong and age-old habits, impulses and tendencies, extending even to many many previous lives —according to the doctrine of transmigration of soul. These habits and tendencies, based on the egoistic approach, are so overpoweringly strong and deep-seated that they have practically become an article of faith and conviction with him. As such, a revaluation and modification of his habitual approach and behaviour appears to him paradoxical and unnatural, and there is an innate resistance to, and denial

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of, the very idea of universality of self and basic unity of all beings. Under such conditions, any reformation and change in his ways of thinking and living can be accomplished only by a radical re-education, and sustained and persistent efforts. However, the task, though difficult, is not hopeless, because 'Truth will out' has been aptly and correctly said. Such a reformation in man can take place in many ways. It may follow upon hearing words of wisdom from an enlightened and spiritually evolved person, or by the study of scriptures and religious books, or sayings and writings of saints and prophets. Or, it may instinctively arise in him through personal experience, leading to the recognition of the hollowness and transience of worldly relationships and material objects, as against the abiding nature of moral and spiritual values, and the fundamental truths and reality. Such a recognition and intellectual grasp has to be strengthened and fostered by constant and wholehearted reflection and contemplation, leading to conviction. This process of hearing and reading and observation, coupled with reflection and conviction, will bring about a gradual but unfailing reformation of the seeker of Truth, in his mental approach, emotional reactions, and physical behaviour. There will ensue a transformation in his thoughts and feelings, words and deeds. The hold of his egoistic tendencies and materialistic ways of life and thinking will be loosened yielding place to an altruistic approach and spiritualistic way of life, and a correct understanding of the world and its underlying Reality. In order to succeed in his efforts for 'Self'-realisation and spiritual enlightenment, the seeker of Truth has not only to acquire knowledge and understanding of the Truth and Reality, he also has a greater need for adopting virtuous ways of life and conduct; and feelings and emotions saturated with universal love, piety, self-control

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and service. Right knowledge, correct behaviour, and pure thoughts and feelings are the basic necessities for any advance on the plane of spiritual progress and enlightenment. No real or substantial progress and achievement is possible until and unless all the three aspects of one's character—the physical, mental and emotional, are remoulded and refashioned in the light of basic moral principles, and the fundamental Truth. To attain 'Self-realisation', there has to be a thorough overhaul of one's personality, and a transfiguration of the body, mind and heart. The way a spiritually enlightened man instinctively, unconsciously and habitually acts and thinks, that way a seeker of Truth and 'Self-realisation' has to act and think consciously, deliberately, and effort-fully. He has to exercise the utmost vigilance and strict control over his habitual and baser modes of behaviour, thinking and feeling, and turn them and guide them on the paths of virtue, sanity and purity, as ordained by and exemplified in the words and lives of saints, sages and enlightened personalities. And most important of all and essential for any success is unshakeable *faith* in the ideal, and ceaseless *endeavour* for achieving it. Given these two fundamental and basic pre-requisites, success in the attainment of 'Self-realisation' and spiritual insight is practically assured. It is from faith, followed by endeavour, that all other physical, mental, emotional and spiritual traits and characteristics grow and intensify, and contribute to the ultimate realisation of Truth and spiritual insight.

Once the ideals have been analysed and well-understood, and the goals truly and clearly established, man would surely move forward towards the attainment of these ideals and goals, with faith and conviction backing his efforts. The greater the faith, the more zealous would be

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his effort, and a correct understanding would keep him on right lines, and save him from dissipating his energies or falling away from the real ideals and objectives. The goal of human existence, as we have already discussed, is, ultimately, and in the final assessment, one; and that is: Self-realisation', the attainment of our real state of Immortality, Perfect Knowledge and Infinite Happiness. The paths leading to such a consummation, however, are manifold and varied. And there is good reason for the variety and multiplicity of the paths, the ways and means, for achieving that supreme objective. Everyone has to follow the course which is most suited to his temperament, character and circumstances, if good and quick progress is to be made. Every person is severely limited and conditioned by his own peculiar nature, his hereditary associations and environments. As such, no hard and fast rules or rigid courses of action can be prescribed for all, in all circumstances and conditions. Best and quickest results can only be achieved when the course of action is in conformity with the aspirant's natural aptitudes, and closely suited to his special conditions. Thus, the overall and ultimate goal being the same, the paths leading to it are numerous, with deep faith and strenuous effort being common to all. It is therefore very useful and effective for seekers of Truth to have the advice and guidance of a Teacher, who is himself intellectually evolved and spiritually enlightened. Such a true 'Teacher', like a good doctor treating a physical disease, prescribes the correct treatment and course of action for the spiritual malady (ignorance of 'Self'), which is most suited to the person or persons concerned. It is thus observed in the course of history that saints and prophets have appeared from time to time, in various countries and circumstances, to advise and guide humanity towards a healthier spiritual life and moral uplift. Side by side, there is a conti-

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nuous stream of sages and spiritually enlightened personalities who have been teaching and directing men and women in their individual moral and spiritual problems and giving guidance for their spiritual advancement and salvation. The ways and means for the realisation of Truth are thus numerous and diversified. But even so, the most well-established and fruitful paths to that goal, specially according to Hindu Philosophy, are the undermentioned four:

1. "Karma-Yoga"—the 'Path of Action',
2. "Gyan-Yoga"—the 'Path of Knowledge',
3. "Dhyan-Yoga"—the 'Path of Meditation', and
4. "Bhakti-Yoga"—the 'Path of Divine Love'.

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PART III

THE FOUR PATHS

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XV. THE PATH OF ACTION ("KARMA-YOGA")

Before we proceed to discuss 'Path of Action' ('Karma-Yoga'), let us first clearly understand what this term stands for. Action, as such, is universal and continuous among all living beings. It may be in the shape of elementary physical activity, reflex and psycho-motor actions, or conscious and well-deliberated actions, in which the body follows the dictates and decisions of the mind; or it may be the mind alone engaged in its own internal, mental and intellectual activity. Thus action, or activity of some sort is inescapable as long as there is life in the body. In fact, action is necessary and essential for the mere preservation of life itself in the body. One must needs eat and drink, excrete, wake and sleep, and perform other natural and essential activities, which the physical nature demands, and without which life would be impossible. And, broadly speaking, there prevails intense and ceaseless activity, inside and out, all over the world, whether it be in living things or dead matter (as it is so called). From the tiny atoms and molecules to the enormous stars and galaxies, everything is continuously active. Indeed, the world would be an unimaginably different thing if there were no activity of this magnitude and universal scale.

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Now, action being the order of the day and absolutely comprehensive in its scope, man is likewise subject to its operation. But that is not all. Man is possessed of a highly developed mental faculty, as compared to the other creatures and is therefore capable of and engaged in actions on his own initiative, and under his mental guidance and physical control. He chalks out a course of action for himself, which is related to his wants and desires, his ideals and aspirations. He not only just lives his life in the world as he finds it; he also wants that the world should give him something in return for what he does and lives for. He has, no doubt, to conform to the world and its laws and ways; but he tries, as best as he can, that the world round him and even farther off, conforms to his ideas and ideals, and sustains and develops his personality and ambitions. Being possessed of the powers of thinking, reasoning, speculating etc., he engages in physical and intellectual pursuits, which would yield him the results that he desires and aspires for. He may pursue the right ideals or wrong, he may adopt correct and proper means and methods or otherwise, depending upon his character and temperament, aims and objectives, and intellectual growth and refinement. But his mind does not allow him to rest content with things as he finds, or as they come to him. It constantly goads him on to progressive activity, endeavours and pursuits in various directions, according as they promise the fulfilment of his desired objectives. It is thus that man is ever engaged in action of one sort or another.

In our present context, however, we have enumerated 'Path of Action' as one of the ways for realisation of Truth, and release from the bondage of egoism and ignorance. We have therefore to see what type of 'Action' is that which leads the way to the aforesaid goal. It obviously could not

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be the sort of action or activity that engrosses and engages most of the people in its sweep, for the simple reason that there are only too few among millions who have realised the 'Truth', or even those who are progressing on the road to such realisation. If we cast a look around and observe how the vast majority of people are performing their actions and in what activities they are engaged in, we would notice that desires and personal interests are the dominating features. In almost every case we would find that there is an effort and a struggle to live, to live well, and to do better and be better. In as much as that goes, there is hardly any room or reason for criticism or fault finding. Everyone is fully entitled and justified in striving for self-preservation, self-development and promotion. In fact, that is a duty cast on all by the mere fact of their birth and life in the world. But, when that striving for self-preservation and self-development takes on the forms and ways of mere self-seeking and physical and material self-aggrandisement, without moral and ethical restraints, it produces a chain of evil reactions. From that sort of behaviour, there arise conflicts, jealousies, and hatred, and other baser passions, which culminate in one's own moral and spiritual degradation and strife, suffering and mutual animosities all round. Most of the activity and attention of men and women at large is confined to the physical level, interspersed with intellectual, cultural, and artistic pursuits. But the main and guiding force in all such effort and activity is the physical and material aspect of self—the egoistic interests, as opposed to the higher altruistic and moral considerations. There are, however, on the other hand, instances where moral and spiritual considerations of a higher order are also the moving forces of action, and where physical and merely personal interests are subordinated, and even sometimes ignored. In such instances, men and

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women are imbued with an enlightened self-interest, and a virtuous and nobler approach to life and the world. They are dedicated in their thoughts and actions to the moral and spiritual uplift and betterment of their own selves and their fellow-men. Thus, we notice that there is a clear distinction between the attitudes and actions of the above-mentioned two types of persons: those—and they are in a great majority—that are working on the physical and personal level, and those few who are influenced and motivated by moral and spiritual ideals, which lift them above the merely physical and selfish ambitions and pursuits to virtuous and self-ennobling levels of action and thought. But, because of the fact that a vast majority is following the path of pure self-interest, where all thought and action is devoted to the preservation and promotion of one's own separate interests and well-being, it would be well to discuss and examine their view-point and actions. As we have already observed earlier (see chapter VIII), self here is used to denote the lower personal self (ego), and constitutes one's personal physical self, one's material possessions and goods in general, and one's social and worldly position, power and prestige. It is also inclusive of the above three factors as appertaining to those with whom we are attached by love, family and other ties, and relationships. Such a selfish (egoistic) approach to life and the world leads a man to seek and promote his own good and that of the others with whom he is attached. In so doing, he ignores and even comes into conflict with the good of numerous other persons who do not fall within the sphere of his own interests and attachments. He has his own ideas and objectives regarding his personal and other interests, and he goes ahead, with all effort, to accomplish the same, irrespective of and even in spite of the opposition from the others, who in their turn are also bent upon the same task. Such being the state of affairs,

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conflict and clashes, passions and animosities, are bound to arise; and it is only social and legal sanctions and penalties that keep the conflicts in check. No doubt, there is also the great restraint, among many a person, exercised by one's conscience—that soft inner voice, which speaks the words of sanity, restraint, and morality, and which reflects the noble spiritual light within us. But, in spite of social sanctions, legal penalties and the voice of conscience, conflict and strife do prevail on a very large scale, and crime and immorality are seen to be far too common. In the grip of intense desire and attachments, and the heat of passions and rivalry, man does not stop (and cannot stop) to think rationally and morally. His obsession with his self-convinced interests makes him callous and rebellious to all restraints, and he tries as best as he can, to fulfil his personal desires and ambitions. It should, however, be noted that there is nothing inherently wrong is one's trying to satisfy his essential personal wants, and making every endeavour to create a better life and living conditions for himself and others for whom he has his responsibilities and obligations. The struggle of life faces almost everyone in its full rigour and harshness, and demands an extremely strenuous and never-ending vigil and striving. One who does not stand up to it, with all his resources and energy of mind and muscle, has not done his duty and accomplished the task of his life. But the trouble arises when the struggle is carried on *with passions and prejudices, attachments and hatreds, and without internal checks and balances.* Mere external restraints, e.g. social, legal etc., do not and cannot act as sufficient deterrents from moral and ethical lapses, and even less effective are they for any real progress of man towards moral rectitude, or religious and spiritual development. The real source and sanction for correct conduct, and moral and spiritual advancement lies inside man, in his own refined and cultured

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sensitivity and discretion, balanced way of living, thinking and feeling; and in his purity and nobility of thought and action. And the most important and essential factor which creates and promotes all such qualities is an ingrained and unshakeable understanding of, and faith in, the basic moral values and eternal truths. Now the question arises as to how such internal sanctions and correctives are to be developed, and how that understanding, conviction and faith are to be achieved, so that it may be followed up and translated into one's daily activities and conduct of life in general. This matter has been discussed in detail in the context of the enlightenment and purification of 'Buddhi' (Intellect) under chapters XII and XIII. It would therefore suffice to reiterate here the salient points regarding the training and culture of 'Buddhi', with special reference to its application to and guidance of our actions in our day-to-day life, leading to freedom from the bondage of the baser self (ego) and the realisation of Truth.

As noted earlier in this study, 'Buddhi' is the chief guiding and controlling force in man's activities. It is therefore obvious that his rise or fall in any sphere of activity, be it worldly or religious, material or spiritual, depends upon the quality and calibre of his 'Buddhi'. A well-developed and cultured 'Buddhi' will carry a man towards higher goals and noble achievements; and a crude or vicious 'Buddhi' on the other hand, will drag a man down towards failures, vice and suffering, and material and moral degradation. Therefore, the first and foremost necessity for a man who wants his moral and spiritual uplift (and even material progress) is to develop and enlighten his 'Buddhi' and make it pure and refined. The most important and effective ways of enlightenment and purification of 'Buddhi' are: (i) association with noble and enlightened personalities, and

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pondering over their words and deeds, (2) reading and reflecting over religious and spiritual literature, and the lives of saints and sages, and (3) emulating their noble deeds, and strict adherence in our daily lives to the words and guidance of such great personalities and religious and spiritual leaders. By following the above three-fold ways, man's 'Buddhi' rises above the lower levels of a purely egoistic and materialistic approach to life and the world, and develops a balanced outlook and altruistic approach. Side by side with such a development, the baser passions such as hate, greed, lust and pride etc., begin to loosen their hold on him, yielding place to love and service, humility and self-sacrifice, and a habit of self-control. This naturally leads to the refinement and purification of his conduct and character. Most of the sin and vice in the world is due to man's passions, greed and lust, and an uncontrolled pursuit of selfish interests and desires. The only cure for these ills, which are the cause of moral and spiritual degradation, lies in self-control and a higher and nobler outlook. And this is what the enlightened and purified 'Buddhi' provides. To resist and surmount evil temptations and pitfalls which surround a man all through his life, the control and guidance by such a 'Buddhi' is the only bulwark and defence. It shows the right way, keeps the mind ('Mana') in control and balance, and leads to a correct conduct and noble character. Temptations and provocations of the world then do not sway him away from the right path and action, and he is saved from the risks of falling into vice and sin. It thus sets him on the high-road of moral and spiritual progress and enlightenment, and frees him from the bondage of ego. A refined and cultured 'Buddhi' not only shows the way and goal, it also reforms the conduct and character of man, by ennobling and spiritualising his thoughts and feelings. Baser desires and passions having been curbed

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and subdued, and high morals and virtues stimulated, man begins to make a quick and steady progress towards 'Realisation of Truth'—his Real 'Self' and freedom from sin, misery and the bondage of Ego. When that happy state is reached, the world and its temptations cease to unsettle his equanimity and peace of mind. He moves forward in a *detached way*, unaffected by success and failure, and untainted by sin and vice, dedicated only to the performance of his duties, service of fellow-beings, and promotion of good and well-being all round.

Before we close the examination of this subject, viz., 'Path of Action', it would be well to consider another aspect of this matter. The struggle of life demands utmost vigilance and circumspection, discretion and self-control. There are myriads of temptations and provocations all round, drawing one away from the path of righteousness and duty. Not only are there these external threats and inroads on one's smooth and unhindered advance towards the goal of salvation and realisation of truth, there are also the internal weaknesses and prejudices, passions and deep-rooted sinful propensities, that come in the way of Man's successful struggle in life against sin and vice and moral turpitude. And in fact, these latter are much greater and more powerful obstacles in man's moral and spiritual progress, and far more difficult to subdue and conquer. Thus hemmed in between both these external and internal obstructing and frustrating pressures, man is faced with a very difficult task in the world if he aspires for moral advancement and spiritual enlightenment. There are some who would advocate, in view of such immense difficulties and obstacles, the path of renunciation and retirement from the world and its affairs. They would recommend to the aspirant a life away from

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the world in seclusion, bereft of any association and relationships with the world and worldly men and women, in order to concentrate wholly and solely on the pursuit of spiritual advance and 'Self-realisation.' But there is the other school of thought which denies the usefulness and practicability of such a course, and counsels the continuance of the struggle of life, inclusive of worldly duties as well as moral and spiritual redemption, while living and working in the midst of one's duties and responsibilities in the world. This latter school of thought bases its arguments on the inevitability of action, and contact with the world, in whatever sphere one may be living in, whether it be a cave or hermitage, or at his post as a house-holder. It is undeniable that, so long as life lasts, certain essential activities of body and mind have got to go on, such as eating and drinking, clothing and shelter etc., and these must needs be provided for and attended to. It is therefore impossible to give up all contact and relationship with the world around, while a man lives. Moreover, there is another great fallacy in the reasoning of the advocates of the path of renunciation, and that lies in the fact that hindrances and obstacles, caused by outside forces, persons and things are not so powerful and hard to resist as one's own internal baser passions and vices, desires and hatred, greed and lust etc., which hamper and obstruct a man's effort and progress towards the goal of salvation and 'Self-realisation'. And the most formidable difficulty here is that one cannot get rid of these internal impediments by merely getting away from the world into seclusion, because they are unshakeable and ever-present companions of man till such time and stage when he has been able to conquer them and shake them off. Without vanquishing the evil inside us, we are not in a position to resist the evil outside ourselves and safeguard

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and accelerate our advance in the direction of moral and spiritual redemption and salvation. And once the internal sin and evil has been eradicated, one's spiritual progress is assured, in spite of external distractions, pulls and pressures in the day-to-day life in the world. It is therefore necessary to start with controlling and subduing the vices and sinful tendencies inside ourselves and the mere running away from the world will not help us nor lead to the achievement of the desired objective. In fact, without a ceaseless and intense struggle, waged in the moral battlefield of the world, against all internal and external foes, there is no salvation from personal sin and vice, and advance in the spiritual sphere. The internal enemies are there, and have to be fought in the open. One cannot escape from them or avoid them by taking refuge in jungles and caves. It is the world that brings them out in the open, and it is here that they are to be fought and vanquished. It is in the world that temptations arise and provocations are caused; and it is right here that, by resisting temptations and forbearing provocations, by the control of desires, hates and base passions, that victory over the real enemy (inner evil) has to be achieved.

In the end, it would be well to answer a possible question that may be asked. Some might enquire whether man attains spiritual enlightenment and 'Self-realisation' by simply following the 'Path of Action'. Is it possible to achieve the purpose and goal of human life—viz. 'Self-realisation', by simply eradicating evil passions and egoistic tendencies, and by developing moral and altruistic traits? Before answering this question, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by 'Self' and 'Realisation of Self'. This subject has been considered in detail in the earlier chapters (*see*

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chapters VIII, IX and X and also in Part I—"Real Self and the Ego". A brief resume would therefore be enough for our purpose here. 'Self' denotes that eternal living force, which pervades and encompasses all creation, and holds together all things under universal and immutable laws. That is the 'Self' of all, The Truth—one may call it God, or Infinite Life, or by any other name. That is the real self of all, you and I and they. It is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal from infinity to infinity. It is perfect bliss. All of us are the repositories of these attributes, which are our birthright, our nature and real being. If we fail to directly experience these inherent traits of our being in our daily lives, it is due to our ignorance and forgetfulness of our real self and identifying ourselves with something that we are not. We mistakenly consider our body and mind (the ego) as ourselves, and thus unwittingly become subject to disease and death, suffering and vicissitudes, and all the ills of duality and multiplicity. We seek the fulfilment of our basic urges in external things; and the more we continue and persist in our efforts for self-fulfilment (Eternal Life, Perfect Knowledge and Power, and Infinite Bliss) in outside objects, the more we get entangled in such objects, the error and confusion grows and deepens, and frustration and unhappiness ensue. Attachments and revulsions, and all the host of dualities result from our erroneous and vain struggles in search of happiness, and self-fulfilment. The grip of the ego becomes stronger and stronger, and the stranglehold of attachments to persons and things becomes tighter and harder. Passions and vices, sin and misery naturally spring up from heightened attachments and egoism, and we continue to fall down and away from our real happy and divine state. In the midst of such a state of affairs, the only hope and salvation lies in (1) true

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understanding of our 'Self' and real nature of things; (2) reformation and reorientation of our thoughts and approach, and (3) turning away from wrong pursuits, towards right objectives and actions. Such a reformation and re-education of our thoughts and feelings, and redirection of our approach and actions, will put us on the path of 'Self-realisation', by removing ignorance and eradicating egoism and attachments. It is not that we are required to acquire and seek something from outside to achieve 'Self-realisation'. It is our real self and being, and in us and with us all the time. What we have to do is only to remove that ignorance and misconception which has clouded our thinking and defiled our feelings and actions, by the true understanding of and firm dedication to our inherent and real divine nature and Blissful state. Take the case of a mirror for an illustration. If the mirror is covered by dirt, one cannot see one's face in it. Remove the dirt, and there at once appears your face in all its clarity in the mirror. Similarly, once that cloud of ignorance, and impurity of action, thoughts and feelings, is eradicated, the Real Self dawns and shines in its full glory, inside and out.

It would thus be seen how 'Path of Action' leads to the successful implementation of this dual objective. By imparting spiritual knowledge and correct moral training, and by enforcing the strict observance of non-attachment and self-control in all bodily and mental activities, 'Path of Action' removes ignorance, and the impurity in thoughts, feelings and actions. This opens the way for 'Self-realisation', by freeing man from the bondage of egoism, vice and sin. 'Path of Action' (Karma-Yoga) trains man in the art of proper living and right action. It teaches non-attachment to personal things, a rational and balanced approach

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to world's problems, and self-control. One who has progressed on this Path, duly performs his duties, irrespective of, and unaffected by the personal gains and rewards of such actions, and the pleasure or pain, glory or ignominy, accruing to him therefrom. By observing this code of conduct, he becomes immune to the strains and stresses of temptations and provisions. He does not lose his balance of thought, feeling and action; and his equanimity and peace of mind is not disturbed by internal or external pressures. He remains firmly rooted to and identified with his real 'Self'—the Eternal Truth, the Ever-Blissful. Thus, in course of time, he attains a state where his sense of ego has vanished, yielding place to a universal and all-embracing consciousness, with no separate interests and duality. He becomes merged with his Real Self—which is the Universal Self. He has realised Truth.

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XVI. THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE ("Gyan-Yoga")

We have explained and discussed the 'Path of Action' in the preceding chapter. Now, we proceed to examine the 'Path of Knowledge' (Gyan-Yoga), which is also one of the paths leading to 'Self realisation,' as noted earlier. The main difference between this Path and the 'Path of Action' lies in the approach and response of the aspirant towards the world, and its problems. Let it be clearly understood at the very outset, that there is here no negation or cessation of action as such, because that is impossible so long as life lasts. 'Path of Knowledge' should not be, and can not be, taken to mean that one following this Path puts a complete stop to his physical activities, as opposed to the followers of 'Path of Action', who keep themselves engaged in worldly affairs and activities—physical and intellectual, as well as spiritual. What is really indicated by 'Path of Knowledge' is that the aspirant on this Path ceases to have any interest in, or active association with the world, and its men and things. For him, the world loses its practical importance and reality, and takes an incidental and minor place in his life and thoughts. His main purpose and interest draws away from the external manifested world, towards the inner core of 'Truth', the Universal 'Self', which is the ultimate and eternal reality. So long as his body and soul

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keep together, he has got to maintain the minimum necessary contact with the world. But, beyond that, he maintains no association or interest in things mundane. His whole and sole interest is rooted in the inmost 'Real Self'; and the external world, with all its things and men—inclusive of his own physical self (the ego), lose their hold and attraction for him. He thus lives intellectually and wholeheartedly attached and attuned with his 'Real Self', and his worldly activities are reduced to the barest minimum. It is in this sense and context that this path is called 'Path of Knowledge' ('Gyan-Yoga').

It would therefore be obvious that 'Path of Knowledge' is rather exclusive, and restricted in its scope to the few, who by their training, or inborn nature, or circumstances, develop a strong spiritual pull and bias, and a corresponding deep-rooted detachment from the things and men in the world. The aspirant on this Path starts off with a firm faith and conviction that the world in manifestation is transitory, devoid of substance and stability, and lacking in real lasting happiness. They are, on the other hand, equally firmly convinced of the abiding nature and blissful state of the Real Self—the Eternal and Infinite Being underlying and permeating all manifestation. With this conviction and unfaltering faith, they pursue the attainment of spiritual enlightenment and a direct cognizance of the 'Truth' through severe self-abnegation and austerities, and a rigorous discipline and control of body, mind, and egoistic feelings. This naturally leads them to spend their lives in seclusion—in jungles, hermitages, or places of religious sanctity, away from worldly activities and involvements, such as marriage, family life, property, and possessions. For their subsistence and other essential physical requirements, they depend upon

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what they can get by way of alms, charity, and assistance from individuals and institutions. As noted earlier, the 'Path of Knowledge' is exclusive and not meant for all types of aspirants in varying stages of moral and spiritual development. The austerity and hard life on this Path demands a very advanced stage of self-control and discipline, and deep-seated detachment from the world and its pleasures and attractions, and a burning desire for 'Self-realisation'. Without the above preliminary qualifications, and an unshakeable faith in the spiritual heritage and basis of all creation, no advance or success on this Path is possible. It is therefore vitally necessary for the aspirant, before embarking on this Path, to seek guidance and initiation from a Teacher ('Guru'), who is himself spiritually enlightened and intellectually advanced. He must then subject himself to a severe course of training and self-purification. Whereas 'Path of Action' also demands strict self-control and discipline, and a high degree of detachment from sense-pleasures and worldly temptations, here on the 'Path of Knowledge', the aspirant has not only to be mentally and emotionally detached, he also becomes physically *dissociated* and severed from his worldly ties, connections and possessions. The man of 'Action' ('Karma-Yoga') relinquishes the lure of personal gains and rewards of his actions whilst living a worldly life. The man of 'Knowledge' ('Gyan-Yoga') goes a step further, and relinquishes worldly activities and connections. While on 'Path of Action' there is a firm *mental* renunciation and non-attachment to actions, and their fruits, on 'Path of Knowledge' there is both *physical as well as mental* non-attachment and renunciation of worldly activities and its things and persons. It would thus be clearly noticed that 'Path of Knowledge' is much more rigorous, severe and exacting, and

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requires a very high degree of mental, moral, and spiritual development and intense detachment.

We would now describe the main guiding principles and tenets to be observed by the followers of 'Path of Knowledge'. The initial pre-requisites (similar to those in 'Path of Action') are: (1) hearing words of spiritual and religious wisdom from spiritually and morally advanced persons, saints and sages; and reading scriptures and sacred books and biographies, (2) associating with such spiritually and morally advanced persons and saints, and reflecting on their words and deeds, and (3) emulating, in one's own life, thoughts and actions, the example of such great personalities, and whole-heartedly and constantly observing their instructions and advice. Following upon the above threefold course of preliminary training and imbued with a high degree of detachment, and intense desire for salvation, the aspirant seeks a 'Teacher' ('Guru') to direct and guide him on the spiritual path. The teacher, who must himself be a 'Self-realised' person, thereupon examines the moral credentials and essential requisite qualities of the aspirant for his being fit for initiation and training on the 'Path of Knowledge'—the first essentials, of course, being extreme detachment to worldly things, and keen desire for 'Self-realisation' and salvation. If he finds him fit and competent enough to take to the hard road of 'Knowledge', he initiates him on this 'Path' by prescribing proper and suitable spiritual practices and religious observances. There are numerous such practices and observances, which carry a person forward on this path, and the Teacher in his wisdom, selects those specific ones that are best suited to the qualities, and mental and physical talents of the particular aspirant. It is not within the scope of this book to go into the enumeration

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of the various practices, observances and austerities that are considered useful and efficacious. Suffice it to say, that the enlightened Teacher ('Guru') is the best judge for prescribing the particular modes and practices that are suited to each individual seeker of Truth and salvation, and initiates and guides him accordingly. The aspirant, thereafter, through single-minded dedication and all-out effort in the observance of the Teacher's instructions, develops and matures in himself the following qualities, which in course of time and with due effort lead him to his cherished goal of 'Self-realisation'.

1. Firm and clear *discrimination* between the Real and unreal, the Truth and untruth.
2. Complete *detachment* from sensory pleasures and worldly objects.
3. The undernoted six virtues:
   (a) Tranquillity and control of mind and emotions,
   (b) Control of body and sense-organs (Indriyas),
   (c) Satiety, or the absence of lure of worldly pleasures and activities, and material greatness,
   (d) Power of endurance and forbearance,
   (e) Unshakeable faith in the Infinite Being, God or Deity, the Scriptures, and the instructions of the 'Teacher', and
   (f) Steady and one-pointed mind, leading to meditation, and
4. A burning desire and ceaseless longing for Realisation of Truth and direct cognizance of the Real 'Self', which brings salvation from misery and liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

The above-mentioned course of spiritual education,

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consisting of the three-fold preliminary training, followed by the 'Teacher's' initiation and guidance, and subsequent practices and observances leading to the full development of the four virtues described above, carry the aspirant to the goal of 'Self-realisation', and ultimately direct spiritual identification with the Infinite Being. He becomes mentally, emotionally and spiritually poised for a direct cognizance of the Eternal Truth and Reality. But, here it would be well to note one important aspect of this matter. At this highest stage of development and preparedness, there remains an element of divine intervention, before the final consummation of the aspiration for direct spiritual illumination and cognition. One should not take it as an automatic and mechanical process that the highest spiritual illumination and God's vision descends upon the aspirant as soon as he attains a high stage of spiritual development and preparedness. It is something too subtle and mysterious to comprehend and control. One may understand it as God's Grace or Divine Dispensation. There is, however, no question of a risk of failure or doubt in the ultimate attainment of salvation and divine vision by the perfected and intensely dedicated aspirant. It is bound to come to him, whether it be sudden and immediate, or delayed for some time. There is only a question of time and occasion when that supreme and crowning objective will be achieved through that mysterious and subtle power of Divine Will and *Grace*.

Before concluding this chapter, it would be useful to give a brief description of the state of mind and spiritual experiences of the aspirant on the 'Path of Knowledge'. It should, however, be borne in mind that the description given below is not comprehensive or all-embracing in its scope or details. There may be again wide

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other experience does not take place, or where some peculiar or special experiences are gone through. There may also be cases where the order of the experiences and their timings and stages are maintained in the manner presented here. It is only meant to show by the following description how, generally, the aspirant on this 'Path' makes his advance towards final spiritual illumination.

There are seven well-recognized stages which an aspirant passes through on this 'Path'. They are:

(1) "Shubhechha"
(2) "Suvicharana"
(3) "Tanumanasa"
(4) "Sathvapatti"
(5) "Asansakti"
(6) "Padarthabhavani"
(7) "Turiyaga"

Let us now take them up one by one, and explain their implications.

1. "*Shubhechha*": It is the fervent and auspicious desire for salvation and 'Self-realisation', which follows upon the preliminary training and spiritual education received by the aspirants, as described earlier, namely: (a) hearing and reading of scriptures and religious and spiritual truths, and association with spiritually evolved personalities; (b) deep and devoted study and reflection upon such truths, and the words and deeds of such enlightened men; and (c) emulating and observing in one's own life and thoughts, the truths thus learnt, and the precepts and examples of saints, sages, and religious leaders. This ardent aspiration for salvation and realisation of Truth may also,

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according to the theory of transmigration of soul, result from the religious and spiritual training received in one's previous life or lives, which is carried over by the human spirit from life to life. In the latter case, the person is born with certain marked spiritual tendencies and a leaning towards a life of religious and spiritual advancement, rather than material gains and affluence. Following upon the aforesaid preliminary training and/or inborn tendencies, the person gradually develops the four qualities enumerated earlier, viz. (a) Discrimination, (b) Detachment, (c) the six virtues, and (d) Intense longing for salvation. The above four qualities then lead him to seek a teacher ('guru'), who instructs him further, and initiates him into a suitable course of spiritual practices and observances.

2. "*Suvicharana*": This is the second stage on this "Path", wherein the aspirant carries forward his spiritual contemplation and practices under the initiation and guidance provided by the 'Teacher'.

3. "*Tanumanasa*": In this third stage, the mind of the aspirant becomes increasingly withdrawn from things of the external material world, and gets steadily fixed in matters spiritual and the innermost Reality.

4. "*Sathvapatti*": At this stage, the aspirant's mind having become inwardly fixed and purified, he starts getting spiritual experiences of a high order, and glimpses of the "Truth"—the 'Real Self'. It is here that the aspirant gets the first direct cognizance of the 'Truth', and spiritual identification and merging with his Real Self. Through the three stages that now follow, the aspirant becomes more and more firmly established in and identified with his Real Self, and experiences the Bliss thereof with mounting intensity.

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His salvation is now achieved, and he is liberated from the cycle of births and deaths.

5. *"Asansakti"*: This fifth stage marks the further growth in the aspirant's mind of extreme detachment and dissociation from all worldly things and external activity. Not only that. He gets mentally detached and physically dissociated from the material world; he begins to lose identification with his own body and its associations. He gets completely released from his ego-sense.

6. *"Padarthabhavani"*: By constant and vigorous meditation, and intensive spiritual practices, the aspirant, at this stage develops a complete lack of interest in the world and worldly things, and his external contacts shrink almost to nothing—even to the point of cessation of eating and drinking and other essential activities over long periods. The inner urge and spiritual identification become so overpowering and all-consuming that they result in an unawareness of his physical self and his environs. He now remains more and more enwrapped and merged in his blissful Real Self.

7. *"Turiyaga"*: This seventh stage is the culmination of all spiritual endeavour, and the acme of the aspiration of the seeker for 'Knowledge' and 'Truth'. Having progressed upto this stage, the aspirant is wholly merged in the Infinite Being—the 'Real Self'. His ego has completely vanished, having been displaced by a direct and infinitely blissful super-consciousness of the real Universal 'Self'. It would not be right even to say that the aspirant, at this stage, is in the enjoyment of perfect bliss. Here, there is no so-called trinity left: the enjoyer, the thing enjoyed, and the enjoyment. It is all merged into one, with no plurality or duality.

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There is no other now, but just One Eternal Perfect Being —the Infinite Life, Knowledge and Bliss. This stage is impossible to describe or comprehend. It is beyond the body, mind, and words. The crust of ego having fallen, and clouds of ignorance having vanished, there reappears and shines in all its glory, Infinite Light and Bliss.

One word more and we end this chapter. It may be inferred by some that the aspirants on the 'Path of Knowledge' having attained 'Self-realisation', finish their lives in inactivity and obscurity, doing nothing in the world or for the world. It is to dispel this misunderstanding that it is necessary to broadly indicate what a 'Self-realised' man does, and how he does it. His ego-sense having been dispelled, his actions and thoughts are not motivated or conditioned by any personal or selfish desires. All his thinking and activities henceforward are in the light of universal good, and moral and spiritual uplift of mankind in general. He may work silently by prayer and through his heightened spiritual influence; or he may actively engage himself in the affairs of fellow-beings, exhorting and stimulating and guiding them by his words and deeds, towards peace, harmony and moral and spiritual betterment. Having passed through the severest tests and trials, and realised the Truth, he speaks and acts through the authority of personal experience and knowledge. Personally, he has achieved all that has to be achieved by a human being. He has found the Truth and his Real Self, and is ever Blissful in himself. But as long as the body and soul keep together, he may live in seclusion, silently and quietly shedding his spiritual light around; or actively engage in works for the good of others, guiding and initiating them towards the Truth, and showing them the ways and means which lead to the liberation from sin and misery, and attainment of Perfection and Bliss.

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XVII. THE PATH OF MEDITATION ("Dhyan-Yoga")

The 'Path of Meditation'—concentration of mind for 'Self-realisation', is based on well-established and concrete scientific principles. It consists of a highly evolved system of mind-control, coupled with breathing and muscular exercises and glandular stimulation. As we have already observed earlier in this study, the basic objective in all paths and systems for spiritual development is the control of the ego-impelled out-going mind ('Mana') and bringing it back in harmony, and close and conscious identification with the Real Self—the Infinite Being. "Dhyan-Yoga" shows the way and propounds an elaborate system by following which the mind ('Mana') is brought under control, and is made one-pointed. It has been noted in the earlier chapters that the constant out-flow and varied fluctuations of the 'Mana' in the direction of sensory pleasures and material objects constitutes the greatest obstacle to real peace and happiness, and spiritual enlightenment. It has been shown that real happiness does not lie in material objects and sensory pleasures; and the unending flux and turmoil of the mind in search of happiness and peace in outside things is foredoomed to failure. Real and lasting happiness comes only when the mind is stilled and settled down, and gets merged in its own source and base, the Real Self, which is the

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repository of all peace and bliss. "Dhyan-Yoga" is the way to achieving this dual objective: (1) controlling and withdrawing the mind ('Mana') from external objects and sensory pleasures, and (2) fixing it in concentration on the one central blissful Reality.

The fundamental concept underlying "Dhyan-Yoga" is the close relationship and inter-dependence of the 'Mana' with breathing and the body, inclusive of the 'Indriyas' (sense-organs). From this basic concept, there arises this system, known as the 'Path of Meditation', through which 'Mana' is controlled by specific and systematised exercises of the body and breathing, along with mental concentration on prescribed lines. It is laid down that by the observance of certain practices and carrying out of given exercises of breath-control and body postures involving particular glands and muscles, the mind is brought under control and in a state of equilibrium, leading to its ultimate one-pointedness and merging with its primal source—the Real Self. It would thus be noted that "Dhyan-Yoga" has two aspects: an external and an internal. The object in view being the control and concentration of the mind, it has to be achieved both by negative and positive effort. All such objects and thoughts that disturb and distract the mind and go against mental equipoise have to be eliminated and avoided—such as worldly objects and thoughts of a disturbing and exciting nature, and bodily infirmities, and diseases. Alongside of the above-noted negative effort, there has to be a positive effort, consisting of a systematic and regular practice of mind-control and concentration. Such a dual approach consists of practices and observances, both of the body and the mind, leading to health and vitality of body and a complete control and one-pointedness of the mind—and dawn of "Truth".

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Before we proceed to describe the governing rules and practices of 'Path of Meditation', it would be well to understand the fundamental principles underlying it. The very first principle is that 'Mana' in a state of flux and outward flow spells lack of real happiness; and conversely, the state of equipoise and restful integration of the 'Mana' with its centre and source brings about real peace and bliss. The example of deep sleep has been quoted in the earlier chapters to show how completely peaceful and exhilarating is that state. And, if we analyse the state of deep sleep, we would immediately note that it is a state where the 'Mana' is wholly free from any movement or fluctuation, and is perfectly calmed down and merged in its blissful source and base. It is then entirely oblivious of any external stimuli, even to the extent of losing all contact and consciousness of the physical body and environs, and the mental and emotional counterparts thereof. But one fact stands out. The 'Mana' in deep sleep loses all awareness, not only of every other thing but also, during that period, of its own very self and existence. It is then neither conscious of its own past and present, or its usual ways of working, nor is it directly conscious of the happiness that it is experiencing during that time (of deep sleep). We might well express it by saying that it is *unconsciously* experiencing happiness while it is merged in its source during deep sleep. It is only on awakening that it becomes conscious of a feeling of happiness, exhilaration and revitalisation that prevailed in deep sleep and persists even after waking up. Now, be it noted that the 'Path of Meditation' shows the way and prescribes rules and observances, by following which one can deliberately get the 'Mana' fixed and merged in its inner core, the Real Self, and thereby *consciously and directly* experiencing the happiness and bliss emanating from such a merger and identification with the Real Self.

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The second principle is the primary necessity of withdrawing the 'Mana' from its usual and age-old and deep-rooted habits of wandering out and about, and its incessant fluctuations. By its ingrained nature, 'Mana' is seeking happiness, and goes about looking for it in one after another of external pleasures and worldly objects. In order to divert its course towards the real happiness that lies inside, a twofold efforts is therefore needed, viz., (1) a check upon and withdrawal from the outward movement of 'Mana' and (2) directing its course inwards towards the source and central point. This twofold objective is sought to be achieved by the practices and observances enumerated in this system—'Path of Meditation'. There can hardly be any doubt that the control and redirection of 'Mana', as described above, is beset with enormous difficulties and impediments, both external and internal. But on the basis of the above-noted two principles, success in the task is attainable by whole-hearted, regular, and continued *practice* on the prescribed lines, and the development in one's mind of a firm and deep *detachment* from sensory pleasures and worldly temptations.

Let us now proceed to survey 'Path of Meditation' ("Dhyan-Yoga") in a more concrete form. We have already seen that it consists of two parts or sections: one concerned principally with the external and bodily aspect —generally known as 'Hatha-Yoga', and the other with the internal and mental—'Dhyan-Yoga' proper, also called 'Raja-Yoga'. But it should be understood that they are not exclusive of each other. It is only a matter of placing greater emphasis on the one part or another, although 'Hatha-Yoga' (bodily counterpart) is sometimes followed mainly or merely for the sake of improvement of physical

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health and bodily development. In the overall system of 'Dhyan-Yoga', however, both these parts are useful and necessary for a full and rapid success in the attainment of the objectives of 'Path of Meditation' viz., concentration of mind and spiritual enlightenment. Mind-control as noted earlier, is not easily and fully attainable unless the bodily and external handicaps and disturbances are eliminated, and as such 'Hatha-Yoga', in greater or lesser degree, has an important bearing in the 'Path of Meditation'. It is, however, necessary to sound a note of caution with respect to this 'Path', specially in connection with the 'Hatha-Yoga' part of it. The exercises and practices falling under this system have far-reaching and powerful effects and reactions on the body and mind of the followers of this 'Path'. It is therefore of paramount importance that such exercises and practices should not be followed haphazard and with only partial knowledge and deficient guidance, because the reactions in such a case on the votary's body and mind are likely to be very harmful and hazardous. Instead of doing him any good—physically or spiritually, such ill-informed and ill-adviced practices, specially in the field of 'Hatha-Yoga', are bound to cause serious troubles and harmful complications. Proper instruction and guidance are therefore a must for starting on and following this line of 'Yoga'.

We would first examine the broad outlines of 'Path of Meditation', and briefly describe the observances and exercises of body and mind that are prescribed under the two sections of 'Hatha-Yoga' and 'Raja-Yoga'. In the present study, we do not propose to go into the details of 'Hatha-Yoga, and 'Raja Yoga', or to describe the various rules and practices that are prescribed and observed by the followers of these systems. For all such details and proper

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understanding and instructions the reader is advised (if he be so interested) to study standard books written on this highly specialised subject, and more important still, to seek the personal guidance and initiation from some well-qualified teacher, as pointed out before.

There are eight steps or stages on the 'Path of Meditation' ('Dhyan Yoga'). The first two are of the nature of a preliminary training of the mind and character. The next two deal with the bodily and external aspect of this system (known as Hatha Yoga), and the remaining four are devoted to mental development and concentration (commonly known as 'Raja Yoga'). The eight aforesaid steps are:—

1. 'Yama'
2. 'Niyama'
3. 'Asan'
4. 'Pranayama'
5. 'Pratyahara'
6. 'Dharana'
7. 'Dyana'
8. 'Samadhi'

This last step or stage has two phases: (a) 'Savikalpa' and (b) 'Nirvikalpa'.

(*Note*: The above Sanskrit terminology is based on the standard work on 'Path of Meditation' viz. "Yoga Sutras" by Patanjali, the ancient Indian seer and sage who is a recognised authority on this subject, and works of other eminent writers).

A brief description and analysis of the above-noted eight steps is given below:

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1. *'Yama'*: The first step on the 'Path of Meditation' consists of certain checks and restraints that the aspirant has to observe, in order to purify and cleanse his mind of the evil and sinful habits and tendencies that taint the mind and character, and cause the greatest hindrance to moral and spiritual progress. These restraints are five-fold, namely: (a) *'Ahimsa'*: Non-injuring in thought, word and deed. A continued practice of this tenet leads on to the development of positive virtues of mercy, forgiveness, tolerance and service. (b) *'Satyam'*: Non lying i.e. Truthfulness in thought, word and deed. This also develops, by sincere and continued observance into an ingrained characteristic of the aspirant to be firm in Truth. (c) *'Asteya'*: Non-stealing which includes a negation of all forms of misappropriation, cheating, breach of trust, etc. Positively it creates in the aspirant a deep sense of honesty, sincerity, and conscientiousness. (d) *'Brahmacharya'*: Non-sensuality —keeping the mind and body in check, and away from lust, carnal pleasures and sensual indulgence, more especially relating to sexual gratification. There is a great emphasis laid in this Path on the necessity of observing celibacy, as there is a direct bearing of the preservation of the vital generative fluid on the growth of the powers of concentration and meditation. (e) *'Aparigraha'*: Non-possessiveness and non-covetousness. Eradication of envy and greed, and curbing of the desires for material possessions and wealth are a prime necessity for the aspirant on this Path. In so far as the mind keeps running after worldly and monetary gains and material and physical aggrandisement, there is no chance for it to be quietened and stabilised into a state of peaceful and undisturbed concentration and spiritual meditation.

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2. *'Niyama'*: This second step on this Path consists of positive instructions and directives, as opposed to the instructions in the preceding paragraph, which are of a negative implication. The directives under this head are also five-fold and are as follows: (a) *'Shauch'*: Cleanliness of body and mind. The aspirant is required to be clean in body and pure in mind, and this involves a two-way effort. In the first place, he has to abjure evil thoughts and desires, which debase and pollute the mind. He has moreover to develop in himself virtues and high morals, so that the mind is not only cleansed, but is also elevated to a purified and high moral stature. Side by side with the above mental purification, the aspirant has to keep his body clean and his environs neat and tidy, by washing, cleaning and sweeping, etc. Bodily cleanliness further involves a moderated diet of wholesome and pure food, which produce and preserve good health. Bodily health and strength are essential for mental growth and well-being, and the practice of concentration and meditation. (b) *'Santosh'*: Contentment. It means keeping the mind steady and unruffled in the midst of untoward and undesirable events and circumstances. This quality, when developed, keeps the mind in a state of equipoise and serenity even when faced with failures, provocations and grief. Worldly ups and downs, pushes and pulls, do not then disturb or excite the aspirant and he is able to progress on the Path of Meditation undeterred by external or internal hindrances. (c) *'Tapa*: Austerity. This means controlling the baser desires and passions, and developing a hardihood and sturdiness of body and mind. It is an ingrained habit of the body and mind that the more they are pampered, the greater become their demand for more comforts and greater satisfactions. It thus comes to pass that the desires for such comforts and satisfactions keep on growing and multiplying, till a stage is

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reached when they become all-absorbing and all-consuming, and any little hitch, discomfort or lack of satisfaction creates strong resentment and disturbing reactions in the mind. But, on this path, serenity and quietude of mind are the foremost pre-requisites, and hence it is a prime necessity to make the mind immune from and unaffected by external or internal disturbances and distractions. 'Tapa' (austerity) is therefore to be observed and practised through simple and austere living and deliberate abnegation of pleasures and comforts, in order to make the mind inured to a hard life, and secured against the disturbing effects of physical and material hindrances on this Path. And, the very first on the list of austerities is the control and subjugation of the five senses viz., tongue, skin, eye, ear, and nose, associated with taste, touch, seeing, hearing and smelling respectively, and preventing them from running after their respective objects. (d) *'Swadhyaya'* : Study of (and reflection upon) ethical, religious and spiritual literatures. Side by side with the practice of 'Tapa' as described above, it is necessary to train the mind on the path of right living and right conduct, right aspirations and right ideals. This is provided for under this tenet *'Swadhyaya'* whereby the aspirant gains the knowledge and insight of his true objectives and the proper ways and methods of achieving them. A study of religious and spiritual books (which broadly includes hearing and association with great religious teachers) and reflecting on their teachings, weans the aspirant away from pursuing merely worldly objectives and material gains, and sets him on the course of religious and spiritual endeavour and progress. (e) *'Ishwara-Pranidhana'* : This last of the five positive directives relates to the aspirant's attitude and approach towards the Almighty power—call it The Infinite Being, The Creator, The Eternal Living Force, or God. The aspirant is here directed to recognise the omnipresence, omniscience,

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and omnipotence of God—the Infinite Being, and to surrender in devotion and service to Him and His Will (the universal moral Laws being His Will). Alongside with all his mental and physical activities and spiritual effort, there should all the time prevail in him a deep faith in and devotion to God, and obedience and surrender to His will. As one's Teacher ('Guru') is as good and great for him as God, such obedience, surrender, faith and devotion equally apply to one's 'Guru' as well. The aspirant has to make continuous and whole-hearted efforts to achieve spiritual progress; but he is, at the same time, exhorted to ever remember, in all humility, the Almighty God, and to surrender to Him in devotion and prayer.

We now come to the next two steps on the 'Path of Meditation', namely, (3) '*Asan*' and (4) '*Pranayama*'. They are mainly concerned with the promotion of physical health, strengthening the body, and vitalising the nervous and glandular functions; and mental powers, and concentration follow therefrom. '*Pranayama*' is particularly helpful, specially of an advanced variety, in accelerating and developing meditation. Commonly termed 'Tantra Yoga' and 'Hatha Yoga', the instructions relating to '*Asan*' and '*Pranayama*' consist of bodily postures and exercises and breathing practices. Let us briefly examine each of them:

3. '*Asan*': Literally, it means a way of sitting or bodily posture. There are scores of such postures prescribed under the system of 'Hatha Yoga', each of them suited to the strengthening and development of a variety of muscles, glands, and nerves in the human body. The most important amongst them are the 'Shirsha-Asan', 'Sarvanga-Asan', 'Mayur-Asan', 'Vajra-Asan' 'Shava-Asan and a few others, which are very helpful in strengthening the body and

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nervous system and promoting health, strength and physical endurance. There are, however, some 'Asans' which are specially suited for the purpose of 'Meditation', as they provide an easy and comfortable posture which can be maintained for long periods of time without causing strain or weariness. The most commonly used are 'Padma-Asan', 'Sidha-Asan', 'Sukha-Asan' or 'Swasti-Asan' and they have thus become a part of the system of 'Raja Yoga' or 'Meditation' proper. It should be pointed out here once again that the bodily postures and exercises as prescribed under 'Hatha Yoga' are useful for the aspirant on the 'Path of Meditation', in so far as they build up a strong and healthy body, which is essential for a smooth and rapid progress towards concentration of mind and meditation.

4. *'Pranayama' :* Breath-control or breathing exercises, leading to restraint on the movements of 'Mana' and control of its activity. The practices relating to 'Pranayama' are based on an elaborate and very specialised study of vital forces ('Prana') associated with breathing. It is a universal experience, though hardly ever positively noticed or analysed, that breathing takes place alternately through the right and left nostrils after certain durations of time. During the intervals of change from one nostril to the other, breathing is carried through both nostrils simultaneously, for a short or long period. Under the 'Yoga' system, specially in the 'Hatha-Yoga' and 'Tantra-Yoga', a thorough and scientific study has been made of this subject and certain precise data have been collected and systematised. For a detailed study and understanding of this subject, the reader is advised to study the literature on this subject with the assistance and practical guidance of a specialist in this line. Suffice it to say, for the purpose of our present brief survey that breathing through the right and left nostrils is associated

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with heat and cold (Sun and Moon) respectively, and that a proper balance is sought to be maintained between these two vital forces for the sake of bodily health and mental alertness, and ultimately, for developing powers of concentration.

Furthermore, there is another very crucial aspect of breathing which deep yogic studies and practices have enfolded. It has been established that there is an immense vital force ('Kundalini') lying dormant in every human being at the base of his spinal column. The spinal column—('Brahma-Randra') is possessed of three minutely small and narrow tubes or passages known as 'Ira', 'Pingala' and 'Sushumna' leading right from the very bottom to the top of the skull, interspersed, at well defined distances and stages, with six centres, or gangleons as they are technically called; and ending up at the seventh stage, which is the repository of all Life, Power and Bliss. The six centres in the spine are (1) 'Muladhar', (2) 'Swadhistan', (3) 'Manipur' (4) 'Anahat' (5) 'Vishudha' and (6) 'Agya', and the seventh stage and termination at the top of the brain is termed 'Sahasrara'.

As already noted, breathing generally takes place through the right or left nostrils, with a short (or long) interval in between, when both nostrils come into play. It has been established through 'Yogic' studies and practices that when breathing is going on through the left nostril, it is the 'Ira' passage on the left of the spinal column that is in action. And conversely, when breathing is taking place through the right nostrial, it is the 'Pingala' passage on the right of the spinal column that is active. The third passage, which lies in the middle of both the above, and is known as 'Sushumna', is generally closed and inactive.

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except for short intervals when both nostrils operate awhile. Thus, breathing is normally going on through the 'Ira' or 'Pingala' passages, via the left or right nostrils, and the '*Sushumna*' passage keeps mostly closed, or only partially and innocuously active. That tremendous vital force, viz. 'Kundalini' referred to above, lying at the base of the spinal column, is therefore never active; because the only route through which it can move up is the central passage viz. '*Sushumna,*' and that is almost always closed and inoperative. Now, the goal and aim of 'Tantra' and 'Hatha' Yoga systems is to activise the 'Kundalini' force, and make it move up through its passage—the '*Sushumna*' in the middle of the spinal column. That is sought to be done by '*Pranayama*' exercises and practices. The basic idea is to close up the breath ('Prana') from passing through the left or right passages ('Ira' and 'Pingala' respectively) and to concentrate the whole force and power of 'Prana' at the base of the spinal column so as to open up the '*Sushumna*' (the central passage), and thereby to activise and drive up the 'Kundalini' through that route onwards and upwards towards the highest stage—'*Sahasrara*', at the top of the brain. The principal practices and observances on this course are the control and regulation of breath ('Prana'), by means of Inhalation ('Purak'), Exhalation ('Rechak') and stoppage of breathing ('Kumbhak'), which are practised according to a precise and well-defined system. By a zealous and continuous practice of such breathing exercises (*'Pranayama'*), the aspirant (Yogi) is able to open up the '*Sushumna*' passage, and impel and move up the 'Kundalini' force, which then passes through the six centres or gangleons in the spinal column ('Brahma Randra')—as already noted, and ultimately gets merged in and rested at the last stage of '*Sahasrara*'. All the six gangleons in the upward march of the 'Kundalini', are replete with the greatest powers and plea-

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sures, and the aspirant Yogi on this path experiences and commands those unique and extra-ordinary pleasures and powers as he masters each centre and develops the yogic faculties. But, for the true yogi or aspirant, these powers and pleasures are not the real aim; and he continues his yogic efforts and practices, undeflected and unaffected by the lure of the intermediate pleasures and powers that he finds en route, towards his real and ultimate objective—the attainment of the highest enlightenment and Bliss, which is achieved when the 'Kundalini' is finally rested in *'Sahasrara'* the stage above the brain.

5. *'Pratyahara'*: Withdrawal of the senses (Indriyas') and mind ('Mana') from external objects. This fourth step on the 'Path of Meditation' is the first on the line of mental development and concentration proper, followed by the next three : *'Dharana' 'Dhyana'*, and *'Samadhi'*. As already pointed out earlier, these four last steps on this Path constitute the internal aspect, as opposed to the preceding two, which form the external aspect of the 'Path of Meditation'. Through the strict and thorough observance of the rules and practices enjoined under the four preceding steps, the body, mind and character are fully developed and prepared for the control and concentration of mind ('Mana'), which is the goal and objective of this Path. The first step in this process is *'Pratyahara'*—withdrawal of the senses from their objects and thereby putting a check on the outgoing movements of the mind ('Mana'). As we have repeatedly noted, the mind has an inherent tendency to be running about, to be in a state of constant flux. Whether it be in search of knowledge or in the pursuit of pleasure, the mind ('Mana') keeps continuously moving out and about. And the senses ('Indriyas') provide it with an outlet

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and window for scanning the world. Our aim being to stabilise and concentrate the 'Mana' on the internal Reality or Truth, the obvious first step is to disengage it from external objects. Now, the only media for the 'Mana' to get engaged and contacted with external objects is the 'Indriyas'. All knowledge and all pleasures that the 'Mana' gains and derives from outside is entirely dependent on the five senses ('Indriyas'), namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin. The 'Mana' goes out, through these five senses, and contacts their respective objects, and the whole edifice of the external world is created and developed. In order, therefore, to create conditions for inner contemplation and meditation, the 'Indriyas' have to be abstracted and separated from their objects, so that the 'Mana' does not get an outlet ready for running about.

As an illustration, let us say that a person who is desirous of practising meditation resorts to a quiet, secluded and noiseless place (here is the elimination of ear or hearing sense), sits on a simple and comfortable seat in a suitable and congenial posture having got rid of disturbing and distracting contacts, (here is the elimination of skin or touch sense), closes his eyes (here is the elimination of sight sense), and avoids and precludes strong smells, and eating and drinking (here is the elimination of nose and tongue senses). Thus fortified, he is able to check the outflow of the 'Mana' towards external objects and sensations, and create the conditions for its inward movement and concentration. The external disturbances and distractions have first to be cleared away before being able to fix the mind in concentration and 'meditation'. This step on the 'Path of Meditation,' directs the aspirant to abstract the senses from their objects, by withdrawing and separating them from such contacts. A com-

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plete and perfect separation being normally not possible, the aspirant has to make his best efforts for bringing about a disengagement of his mind and senses from external objects and sensations as far as and as long as possible, in order to attempt fixity in mental concentration—'*Dharana*' and '*Dhyana*' which are the next steps on this Path.

6. '*Dharana*': Applying the mind ('Mana') on one point and concentrating it there. While the preceding step ('*Pratyahara*') was devoted to the negative aspect of concentration of mind, this step is concerned with the positive ways and means of concentration. The aspirant, having earlier cleared the disturbing factors and hindrances, and created the proper and suitable conditions for meditation, now sets upon the course of meditation proper. His aim and objective is to restrain and stop the flux and ceaseless flow of the mind, and focus it at one point, so that it comes to rest, and experiences its inherent and inner peace and bliss. To achieve that objective, the aspirant has to exert his best effort and extreme vigilance and persistence. The 'Mana' has an ingrained and powerful tendency to run out here and there, and it requires all the will-power, and strenuous and continued efforts by the aspirant to halt its movements. Moreover, there is another basic difficulty, and that lies in the fact that the 'Mana' is to be controlled by 'Mana' itself, aided by 'Buddhi' (the intellect, as defined earlier). Even when everything is set and ready for meditation and the aspirant has been able to withdraw his 'Mana' from its wanderings and apply it on one point, it gives the slip, unawares and unnoticed, and starts roaming about. The aspirant, therefore, can never be too vigilant or too persistent in keeping a check on his 'Mana' and restraining it and repeatedly focussing it back on the point fixed for concentration.

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Let us now examine and understand what '*Dharana*' means and implies. We have defined it as "applying the 'Mana' on one point and concentrating it there". In the foregoing paragraph, we have briefly described the way of applying the 'Mana' on one point, the difficulties underlying it and the means to overcome the difficulties. We would now describe and discuss the part relating to the "point" or object of concentration. The aim of the aspirant is to make the 'Mana' one-pointed, so as to stop its vacillation and wandering about. He has therefore to collect all his mental activities, withdraw them from their usual haunts and fix them on a single object or point. To be able to do so effectively and in a sustained manner, the object of his concentration must be simple, easy to comprehend, and suitable and interesting to his nature and temperament. This is specially relevant in the case of beginners on this Path, as their 'Mana' has not yet been subjected to discipline and restraints. Thus, in the early stages of the practice of '*Dharana*', the aspirant should proceed slowly and gradually in fixing his attention on a point or object that stimulates his interest and keeps it fixed there for some length of time. The objective being peace and quietude of mind and cessation of its flux, the object of concentration must needs be one which leads to and promotes such objectives and checks the outflow and wanderings of 'Mana'. In view of the above considerations, the aspirant in the beginning concentrates his attention on such simple objects as the picture or statuette of his deity or patron saint, light or sound, flowing waters, a sunrise or sunset, etc., according as they appeal to him and transfix his mental activity. The above are only a few illustrations, and there is no limit to the number and variety of the objects and points that may be useful and effective in individual cases.

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Here again, it must be noted that one's Teacher or 'Guru' is the best person to instruct and guide the aspirant on the ways and methods of *'Dharana'*. As the aspirant makes progress on this line, his concentration becomes more and more subtle and refined, and reposes in higher spiritual planes deep inside himself. The initial practices of focussing the mind on external objects moulds and disciplines his 'Mana' in the art of concentration, and thereby enables him to practise and attain the higher levels of concentration, at the next following stage of *'Dhyana'*. In his present stage of 'Path of Meditation'—namely, *'Dharana'*, the aspirant is deliberately and strenuously applying his 'Mana' on a point or object, with the desire to keep it fixed there. There are, thus, three parts or facets of the aspirant's practice of *'Dharana'*: (a) the object of concentration, (b) the effort and desire for concentration, and (c) his own individuality, as represented by his 'Mana', trying to achieve the stage of concentration. In other words, there is a trio inside him at this stage, viz., the I, the act of concentration, and the object—I, am concentrating, on the object. We will now see how this trio gets reduced and abstracted into only two, and ultimately merges into one, at the highest levels of concentration in the succeeding stages of *'Dhyana'* and *'Samadhi'* respectively.

7. *"Dhyana"*: Fixity in concentration. By a prolonged and assiduous practice of *'Dharana'* (the preceding step on this path), the aspirant's 'Mana' gets sufficiently disciplined and controlled and becomes capable of remaining unfalteringly one-pointed for longer and longer periods of time. When this stage is reached, the 'Mana' begins to taste the peace and bliss that arises from its restfulness, and absorption in its centre and source. As we have repeatedly noted,

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there lies infinite happiness and peace in our real self, which is also the core and foundation of all our physical, mental and emotional activities and existence. The more we recede from that central real Self, and get mixed up in external objects and sensory pleasures through the outgoing impulses of 'Mana', the lesser the chance we have of enjoying real and lasting happiness. It is only by withdrawing the 'Mana' from its outward wandering and directing and fixing it inside that the immense peace and happiness, pent up at the centre is released, and enfolds the 'Mana' within its sweep. That happiness is always there, pent up and stored inside, in the real Self. If it is not being positively experienced, it is only because the 'Mana' is running away from it in the opposite direction. In order, therefore, to positively and directly experience that infinite happiness, the 'Mana' is to be drawn and fixed inwards, by the practices detailed here and in the preceding pages, under the headings '*Pratyahara*' and '*Dharana*' etc. The object of all such practices is to stop the outward movement of mind, bring it to a rest at one point, and thereby to merge it in its eternally and infinitely blissful source and centre. Like the waves of the ocean, the 'Mana' is constantly in a state of flux, and running out and away from its centre. The moment the waves fall down and settle into the ocean, they merge in its deep stillness. So also, the 'Mana' merges in the deep and eternal bliss of its source (the Real Self), when its movement ceases. It is to that end that all the practices and observances on the 'Path of Meditation' are aimed at. At this '*Dhyana*' stage, the 'Mana' has been already well drilled and disciplined through the practices of the previous stage of '*Dharana*' of focussing it on one point or object; and now it is amenable to entering into a state of deep and prolonged concentration without much difficulty or effort. Even the

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necessity of external and internal aids or objective stimuli is greatly obviated. The aspirant now is more easily able to enter the state of deep concentration by withdrawing the 'Mana' from its outward course and bringing it to a rest. When the 'Mana' is thus rested, it gets absorbed and merged in its source (The Blissful Self) like the waves in the ocean when they lose their motion. The very existence and significance of 'Mana' lies in its movement and volatility like the waves in the illustration. The moment the movement ceases, the 'Mana' (like the waves) ceases to exist as such, and gets absorbed in the totality of its being—its source and base, and there reigns peace and supreme bliss. It would thus be observed that in *'Dhyana'*, the aspirant has stilled the movement of his 'Mana', and thereby merged it in the ocean of bliss that lies inside himself. Moreover, at this stage the effort is very much simplified and diminished, because of two factors. In the first place, the continued and strenuous efforts and practices, that he has gone through in the earlier stages on this Path, have made his further progress easier now. There is yet another factor which is still more important. The aspirant, at this stage, has begun to taste and directly experience, for longer and longer periods, the ecstasy of contact and absorption in his blissful self. His intense efforts and prolonged labours are now bearing fruit and he is able to experience real undiluted happiness. His 'Mana', now of its accord, tends to withdraw inwards and get rested there in perfect peace; and this process goes on repeated and prolonged. Here, the subtle difference between the stage of *'Dhyana'* and the preceding one *'Dharana'*, should be noted. In *'Dharana'*, as already observed, there is a trio inside the aspirant, consisting of the I, the act of concentration, and the object of concentration. At *'Dhyana'* stage, only two facets remain,

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viz. the 'I' and the object of concentration. The third facet of 'act of concentration' now disappears, because the 'Mana' ceases to act or move at this stage and as such nothing is being done. The 'Mana' being rested in bliss, there is only the experience of bliss; and bliss and the 'object of concentration' have become merged and are one. Thus there now remains only a subtle duality, namely: 'I' and 'Bliss' (the object). We shall now proceed to describe the last stage of 'Path of Meditation', viz. '*Samadhi*', and see how even this duality inside the aspirant fades away at that stage.

8. '*Samadhi*': Complete absorption in the Real Self. This is the super-conscious stage, and baffles description. The 'Mana', along with all other components of the 'I' (the Ego) has vanished and has got merged into the all Blissful —Real Self. The 'Mana' having disappeared, there is no activity of mind and no process of thinking and feeling etc. The entire Ego has lost its adopted separate existence and has re-merged and got identified with its True Being and Real Self. There is no multiplicity or even duality left now. It is a super-conscious, purely spiritual state, where there is no activity or consciousness of body or mind. At the '*Dhyana*' stage the aspirant, by deep concentration, gets fixed in the Blissful state and remains conscious of it. Now here in '*Samadhi*', by continuous practice of '*Dhyana*', he loses even his separate identity and with that the consciousness of enjoying Bliss, or being in a Blissful state. He is now merged or absorbed in Bliss itself. He has reached the highest goal on the 'Path of Meditation'—he has become one with Bliss, which is his Real Self. There being no separate 'I' (Ego) left now, there is no medium remaining for understanding or describing this state. It is beyond the

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scope of mind and speech. Like the taste of salt, it can not be described. It has to be tasted to be known and when it is known the knower and known become one.

There is one essential factor in both '*Dhyana*' and '*Samadhi*'', which must always be borne in mind. And that relates to Divine Grace or Spiritual benediction. It is not possible to define or analyse it, and much less possible to argue about it, or insist on it. It is something too subtle to comprehend and too elusive to control or direct. It works at its own time, and in its own way. But the inescapable fact remains that without such Grace or Benediction no real success in '*Dhyana*' or '*Samadhi*' can be achieved, or maintained, or further progress attained. For the highest final illumination and spiritual enlightenment, the aspirant has to depend upon and wait for this Grace. Prayer and humble surrender are the only means by which the aspirant can strive for and hope to receive the Grace.

'*Samadhi*' is further sub-divided into two stages: (a) '*Savikalpa*' and (b) '*Nirvikalpa*'. It must, however, be understood that this sub-division is merely meant to describe the progress of the aspirant on this highest level of 'Meditation', and is not to be construed as defining any rigid or exclusive states. At the '*Savikalpa*' stage, the aspirant remains in the state of '*Samadhi*' for shorter durations as compared to the '*Nirvikalpa*' stage. There is, moreover, a greater intensity and much deeper absorption in '*Nirvikalpa Samadhi*' than at the '*Savikalpa*' stage, so much so that even the severest physical strains and stresses and allied mental reactions fail to move the aspirant from his state of equipoise and absorption in spiritual bliss. He remains always firmly rooted in his true self—the Eternal,

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the All-Knowing, and the Ever-Blissful. All ideas of separateness and personal self disappear. He becomes one with the Universal Life, the All-pervading spirit, that emanates and encompasses the whole existence. He sees himself in all, and all in himself and of himself.

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XVIII. THE PATH OF DEVOTION—("Bhakti Yoga")

It would not be quite appropriate to call this a Path, or way and means for realisation of 'Self' (Truth, the Ultimate Reality) like the other Paths described earlier. Unlike the foregoing Paths, here there is no rigid observance of specific rules and practices, and a strenuous application of 'Mana' on well-defined routes and ideals, for attaining 'Self-realisation'. No doubt, the aspirants on this Path—the devotees—do certainly and ceaselessly pursue certain ideals, and behave and conduct themselves in a special way in pursuance of these ideals. But the real difference between a follower of this Path (Devotee) and those of others lies in their approach and attitude. The devotee does not start on this Path with the object of gaining or acquiring something—even to the extent of going to Heaven or seeking salvation or Self-realisation. His approach, and the urge behind all his actions and thoughts is very different. He is in Love—the deepest, purest, sublimest love. He has fallen in love with his God, deity, Guru (Teacher) or other divine being, and he must needs see him, touch him, serve him and have the ecstasy of his company and sight and contemplation. This becomes a burning passion with him, the sole aim and purpose of his life. Imbued and saturated with this intense desire and love, his entire life and activities be-

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come transformed. Whatever he does or thinks, it is about his beloved deity or God, the point and centre of all his love and devotion and services. He may be devoted to one or other deity, or incarnation of God, such as Shri Krishna, Shri Rama, Lord Shiva, Ganesh, Kali, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, etc. But the approach, and mental and physical counterpart of his intense love of his deity, his beloved, are almost the same in all devotees, namely: the adored beloved deity on the one side and himself, the ardent devotee, on the other. They are, however, not observing any specified rules, or bound to any particular observances. Their actions and thoughts arise naturally and spontaneously in them, and are all centred in their deity, in His contemplation, service and prayers. In order to give a tangible shape to their object of worship and love, they generally take the aid of a 'Murti' (statuette), picture, or other objective model, whereon they concentrate their attention, prayers and services. All the time and everywhere, they are filled and suffused with the thoughts of their beloved deity and the intense desire to see Him and meet Him; and they feel sad and miserable when they are not able to contemplate upon Him and serve Him. Their lives become wholly and solely dedicated to the deity and their deep and overpowering love for Him becomes the driving force, the rule and code of all their activities.

From the above it would be clear that the 'Path of Devotion' is primarily and inherently a matter of emotions, a product of the heart as opposed to the mind and pure reason. While on the Paths of 'Action', 'Knowledge' and 'Meditation', the aspirant is guided and governed by well-reasoned theories, concepts and observances, here on the Path of Devotion, it is the love and devotion of the aspi-

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rant that is preponderant and the *motivating* force. Here it is the sublimated emotional approach that keeps and sustains the devotee on this Path. His only thought and desire is the deity, his God—the sole object of all his love and affection and attachment. In the earlier parts of this book, we have discussed and explained how man is engulfed in misery and sin on account of the shackles of the ego (the unreal self) and the ceaseless outflow of the 'Mana' towards sensory pleasures and worldly attractions. In order to re-establish one-self in the real Blissful 'Self', bereft of all sin and misery, it has been explained how the control and one-pointedness of 'Mana' is essential, and how that has to be achieved. There are numerous ways and means of achieving that supreme goal, but the eradication of Ego-consciousness and focussing and resting of the 'Mana on the All-pervading, All-Blissful Reality, are the two fundamental and inseparable factors in all the Paths leading to 'Self-realisation' and spiritual enlightenment. Now, if we look into the essential elements of the Path of Devotion, we would notice that the two above-noted factors are pre-eminently present and realised on this Path. The aspirant here, due to his intense emotional drive and deep all-embracing love, has no other thought or desire except that of his God or deity. His 'Mana' and all his mental and physical activities are completely merged and concentrated on his beloved God, and there is no other direction or attachment whereto the 'Mana' could run. His entire life and self—his ego—becomes wholly dedicated and merged in the service and contemplation of his deity, so much so that he loses all thought of the world, and even the consciousness of his own self—the ego. His burning passion and intense love of his deity automatically brings forth the desired prerequisites of Self-realisation (God-realisation), viz., eradication of ego

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and restfulness of the 'Mana'. But, be it noted, the devotee does not himself seek or aspire for salvation, or 'Self-realisation'. His only desire and aim is his God, His sight and meeting, and His contemplation; and he has no use or attraction for a state or achievement, be it ever so blissful and sublime, where he cannot have the physical or mental association with his beloved God. God, and contemplation of God, are the be-all and end-all of his very existence. Thus for him, the end and the means become one; and he wholly lives for and thinks of his God and only God.

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have described the broad features of the 'Path of Devotion', and have noted that love of God-incarnate, a deity, prophet or Guru is the salient ingredient and moving force in the life of a devotee. It is an emotional approach and is based in the heart, as opposed to a rational or intellectual approach. It arises in some aspirants naturally and instinctively; and in time, grows stronger and deeper till it grips them completely—body, mind and heart. Such an aspirant is born with deeply devotional tendencies, and his nature, and temperament lead him forcefully on to this Path. The concepts and ideals of other Paths do not appeal to him; and he is driven to a personification of God in the form of his beloved deity or object of devotion, in which and for which all his thoughts and desires are rooted. He thinks only of his deity, sings his praises and adores only him. He talks of him, and likes to listen about him alone. Devotees of this type and calibre are indeed the few and blessed ones; and their lives, words, and character lead and illumine the lives of other aspirants and devotees. There are, however, other followers of this Path who are not inherently gifted with such an

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overpowering and all-embracing love of God. Their development and progress on this Path comes from association ('Sat-Sang') with the aforesaid class of highly evolved and divinely inspired devotees. By listening to their words and songs in adoration of God, by observing their ways and mode of life, and by emulating and reflecting on their life and teachings, the followers of this Path can develop in themselves qualities of deep devotion and love of God. 'Sat-Sang'—association with the great blessed devotees, is the most potent and effective means to develop the love of God and devotion to Him. The more an aspirant avails himself of 'Sat-Sang' the surer and speedier is his progress on this Path. But, for being firmly and unfailingly established on this Path, 'Sat-Sang' has to be combined with one's own efforts and actions on the right lines, leading to a growing and gripping love of God. Therefore, in the early stages and upto the time that love of God has become deep and strong in him, the aspirant has to guard against opposing forces, both internal and external. He must curb and resist all such desires, thoughts, and activities that take him away from or obstruct his worship and contemplation of God, or hamper the growth and strengthening of his love and adoration of God. The chief amongst these opposing forces is the society and association of evil-minded persons and atheists, which must always be eschewed. The aspirant-devotee has to guard his budding love of God as a treasured secret and to nurse it like a tender plant. He would, as far as possible, spend his time in the company of Godly men, saints and devotees, singing God's names and praises and speaking about and contemplating the attributes of God. If he is unable to get such a company ('Sat-Sang'), he would spend his time in the seclusion of his prayer-room or a place of worship, where he would engage himself in acts of worship

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and prayer before his deity. And, it need hardly be mentioned that he must observe strict discipline and purity in his thoughts and actions; and abstain from vice and sin in thought, word and deed. To be impure and vicious himself, and to aspire for the purest and best, the acme of all perfection, greatness and beauty—God, cannot go together. All his thoughts and desires, all his affection and attachments, have to be transmuted, and transfixed in his God, before he can hope to receive His Grace and His revelation. He has to completely dedicate himself to his ideal—in all his thoughts, words and deeds. The pillars of the edifice of God's love are: (a) purity in thought, word and deed; (b) intense desire for God's revelation and contemplation; (c) ceaseless endeavour towards that end; (d) unshakeable faith in God Incarnate, His immanent presence, goodness and kindliness, and the words of the Teacher ('Guru') and devotional scriptures; and (e) 'Satsang'—association with devotees and holy men. Over and above all, the devotee is to be imbued with complete and unflinching self-surrender to his God. All his thoughts and actions are for his beloved deity and subject to His will. He relies wholly and solely on his God for guidance and protection and derives all his strength and initiative from Him. He smilingly and complacently receives whatever comes to him, be it good or ill, pleasing or distressing, as God's kindly boons, and is ever bent upon the service and worship of God. As he progresses on the 'Path of Devotion', he begins to see and feel the presence of his God, who is omnipresent and omniscient and omnipotent, in everything and every person. This broadens the sphere of his worship and devotion and he serves and worships all as the facets and manifestations of God. For him then, all and everything is God, revealing Himself in infinite variety and so, an object of veneration,

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From what has been said earlier, it would be clear that 'Path of Devotion' is unique in several ways. The end is the Love of God, the means is the Love of God, the driving force is the Love of God and the devotee has no other desire or ambition except the unmitigated, unrestricted, and unremitting love and contemplation of God. That being the devotee's attitude and state of mind and heart, there is hardly any room or reason for laying down any special practices and rules to be observed by him. His burning desire and love of his God carries him forward and onward on his Path, alternating between moods of ecstasy and despondency—ecstasy when he feels the proximity and even the slightest revelation of God, and despondency and misery when he feels the separation from God, or the lack and deficiency in himself of unbroken and whole-hearted contemplation and love of God. Even so there are some well-established modes and practices followed by aspirants on this Path. They should, however, not be understood in the sense of any rigidity, either in their application or order of observance. Each and every aspirant has his own special traits and leanings, and the peculiarity and intensity of his desire and devotion. As such, there is bound to be and should be a variety and differences in the ways in which different devotees work their way-up. Broadly speaking, the following are the nine modes of worship or varieties of observances that are most widely accepted and followed on this Path:

1. '*Shravana*': Hearing of God's attributes and kindly deeds. This is a principal part of 'Satsang' (association with holy men) and cultivates and promotes love of God. Reading of religious books and devotional hymns is also included in this category and further strengthens devotional

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feelings in the aspirant. Conversation and discourses, without rancour or hostility, about the divine attributes and merciful deeds of God-incarnate are also an aspect of this form of worship.

2. '*Kirtana*': Singing of God's names and attributes. This is generally done in groups or congregations, but the devotee may perform 'Kirtan' even by himself, wherever and whenever he can get an opportunity. God's names and devotional songs are recited in sweet touching melodies, often to the accompaniment of musical instruments and conditions are created in which the mind and emotions are deeply and constantly fixed on God and His contemplation. Pictures, statuettes, or other models of the deity are placed in a prominent place at the time of 'Kirtan', and are very helpful for sustained attention.

3. '*Smarana*': Thinking of God and meditating upon his attributes and deeds in incarnation. For this form of worship there are no limitations of time, place or other preconditions. The devotee can go on thinking of God and quietly reciting His name, while engaged in his daily worldly activities. As the aspirant progresses on this Path, his thoughts are constantly fixed on his God and the name of God is being continuously repeated inside him.

4. '*Padasevana*': Worship of God and services rendered to Him in all humility. This mode of worship generally takes the form of personal services rendered to the figures or other models of the deity, in the shape of offerings of flowers, incense, food and drink, etc. The 'Guru' (Teacher) is likewise worshipped in this manner, and is held to be as venerable as God Himself. The de-

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votee, in his zeal and intensity of love, feels overwhelmed with a desire to render service to his God in a personal way and takes the aid of figures and pictures of God to worship Him and pray before Him. As he advances on this Path, and begins to feel and realise the presence of God everywhere and in everything, his devotional deeds and services are directed to all creatures, specially the sick and infirm, the needy and down-trodden. He looks upon everyone as a manifestation of his God, and serves him with reverence and humility.

5. '*Archana*': Worship; and 6. '*Vandana*': Bowing and salutations. The above two modes of worship and devotion go together and are an extension of the fourth variety of worship described in the preceding paragraph. The devotee, being filled and inspired with love and veneration for his God, bows before Him and worships Him, with the greatest humility and reverence. He frequents religious resorts and places of worship, and seeks the company of holy men. At all places and in all things, he visualises his God and salutes Him and bows before Him.

7. '*Dasya*': Performance of worship and services in the spirit of a servant of God, or an instrument of His will. In this type of devotion to God, there is a special and binding relationship felt by the devotee to his God. He looks upon God as his master and only master, and he renders services to Him with the greatest humility, loyalty, and submissiveness. The words of God as transmuted through holy men, sacred books and his own well-purified 'inner-voice' become commands of God for him. The instructions and advice of his Teacher ('Guru'), who is the embodiment of God in his eyes, are treated by him as orders from God, and he obeys them meticulously and loyally in the spirit of a

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servant. He claims no more and aspires for nothing higher than a place close to the feet of God and the privilege of serving Him with all the resources of his mind and body. He is all the time seeking ways and means to serve God more and better, and his greatest happiness lies in having served God and pleased Him. His zeal and passion for service of God is so strong and powerful that he would never be satisfied with any condition or situation where he is not able to serve God as a humble servant. Even salvation or merging with God have no charms for such a devotee, and his aim and purpose of life is to serve God. With a broadening of his outlook and spiritual development, he visualises his God in all things, and serves all creatures as manifestations of his beloved God and Master.

8. '*Sakhya*': Devotion to God as a friend. Devotees of God of this category experience in themselves a very close relationship and comradely association with God. For them, God is not something far off and an object of distant veneration and worship. They feel His presence near and all round themselves. For them, God is their constant companion, friend, and comrade, ever regaling them with His blissful company and guiding and encouraging them as the truest friend and well-wisher. They are devoted to God in an intimate friendly way and they Love Him and venerate Him because He is so infinitely wise, loving and kind. His help, sympathy and guidance are unfailing and ever-present. This is the stage on the 'Path of Devotion' where the aspirant begins to experience a personal loving association and kinship with God and the barriers of separateness and dualism are falling away. He is entering the state of 'Para-Bhakti' or supreme and sublime Love. His consciousness rises now to a stage where he feels himself to be God's and God as his own. He begin to appear

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the first glimpses of his spiritual identity and one-ness with God.

9. '*Atma-Nivedana*' : Merging with God. This category of God's love is the climax and the highest achievement on this Path. The love of God at this stage has become so deep, intense, and all-consuming that the devotee loses all concern and awareness except that of his God. He forgets himself and all else in the constant contemplation of God. His heart surging with God's love, and the name of God ever on his lips, the devotee now bears no thoughts other than of God's and performs no actions except for his God. His consciousness of self—body, mind and all—is swept away in the flood of divine love, and he visualises God in all and everything. Through the intensity of devotion and burning love, he reaches the stage now, where even the sense of duality ceases to exist. His self is effaced and becomes identified with God. Here is the purest and sublimest love. The lover and the beloved are merged and unified, and only the ecstasy of union is left. Unending and undiluted Happiness—Infinite Bliss, now prevails.

It is hardly possible for words to fully define and explain the various aspects and stages of the Path of Devotion and Love of God, and a sheer impossibility to describe this final stage. Devotion and love are matters pertaining to the heart and feelings, and are entirely subjective and personal with every devotee. His blissful state and intimate attachment and relationship with God can only be felt by himself in the innermost recesses of his heart. For him, God is not only great and perfect, all-knowing and all powerful, for him God is also all-merciful and ever-friendly—the fountainhead of Love and Bliss. In the contemplation

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and service of God, the devotees experience indescribable happiness; and their attachment and devotion grow deeper and stronger every day, till they get merged and identified with their beloved all-blissful God. 'God is Love', and the way to find and realise God is His love. Blessed are they who cultivate and develop the love of God and self-surrender, because their paths then become smoother and easier, and their progress sure and swift with the help and blessing of God.

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

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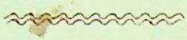
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS



MUMBADEVI SANSKRIT MAHAVIDYALAYA
An Oriental College teaching Sanskrit and Shastras by traditional methods for Shastri and Acharya (recognised as equivalent to B.A. and M.A. respectively) and for Vachaspati (research).

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An Academy of Indian Classical Music, affiliated to the Bhatkhande Sangit Vidyapith, Lucknow, which is recognised by the Central Government for courses leading to the Bachelor of Music Degree.

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The Academy teaches nine foreign languages, viz., German, Russian, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Sinhalese and Nepali.

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The income from this Trust goes to support the Post-graduate and Research Department of the Bhavan.

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This department was constituted in 1963, its chief aim being inculcating culture-consciousness by arranging cultural tours to the various religious, historical, cultural and industrial centres of India.

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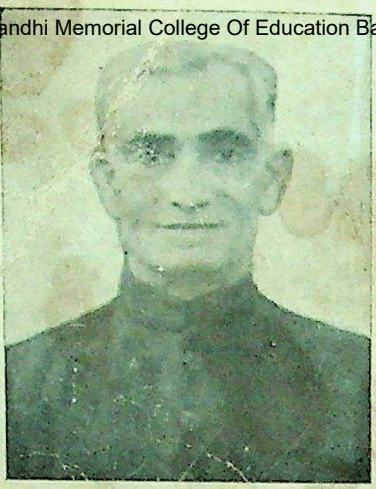

THE AUTHOR

Shri Sham Sundar Haksar belongs to a well-known family of Kashmiri Pandits who are known to have been residents of Kashmir since 18th Century. In the early 20th Century, his father, Dr. Roop Narain Haksar, after his education in Lahore went back to Kashmir and became the State Physician to the then Maharaja, Pratap Singh. He had his education in Srinagar and did his graduation from Sri Pratap College whose Principal, Shri Iqbal Kishen Sharma, was his maternal grandfather. Later he obtained his degree in Law from Lahore.

From the very beginning, he had a religious and philosophical bent of mind. He studied Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and other scriptures from Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Madhav Shastri of the College of Oriental Studies, Lahore and from Dr. Pt. Balkishen Kaul. Later on, under the tutelage of Swami Sivananda and Swami Purushottamananda of Rishikesh he was initiated into the deepest mysteries of Hindu Philosophy. Swami Shri Nityananda gave him a thorough training in Yoga.

He further matured his thoughts and ideas through a close study of the teachings of Shri Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo, Shri Ramana Maharshi and Dr. Radhakrishnan. He also studied the Holy Quran and the Bible.

Thus during 50 years of his life spent in search of truth and God-realisation, he has developed a cosmopolitan and liberal outlook towards religion and philosophy, freed from cliches, unnecessary myths and rituals.

With this broad approach and background of the author, his book "Know Thy Self" is sure [illegible] and [illegible] to persons of [illegible] [illegible] of all countries in the West and East.

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